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FOR

THE ORACLES OF GOD,

FOUR ORATIONS.

FOR

JUDGMENT TO COME,

AN ARGUMENT,

IN NINE PARTS.

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BY THE

REV. EDWARD IRVING, M.A.

MINISTER OF THE CALEDONIAN CHURCH, HATTON-GARDEN.

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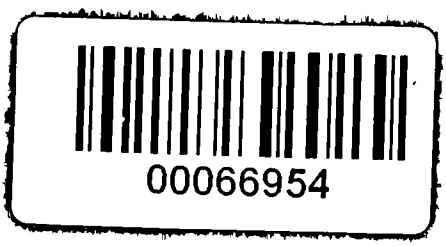

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PREFACE.

It hath appeared to the Author of this book, from more than ten years' meditation upon the subject, that the chief obstacle to the progress of divine truth over the minds of men is the want of its being properly presented to them. In this Christian country there are, perhaps, nine tenths of every class who know nothing at all about the applications and advantages of the single truths of revelation, or of revelation taken as a whole; and what they do not know they cannot be expected to reverence or obey. This ignorance, in both the higher and the lower orders, of Religion, as a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, is not so much due to the want of inquisitiveness on their part, as to the want of a sedulous and skilful ministry on the part of those to whom it is entrusted.

This sentiment may seem to convey a reflection upon the clerical order; but it is not

meant to reflect upon them so much as to turn their attention to the subject. They must be conscious that reading is the food of thought, and thought the cause of action; and, therefore, in what proportion the reading of a people is impregnated with religious truth, in that proportion will the conduct of a people be guided into religious ways. We must, therefore, lay our hand upon the press as well as the pulpit, and season its effusions with an admixture of devout feeling and pious thought. And as men read for entertainment and direction in their several studies and pursuits, it becomes needful that we make ourselves adept in these, and infuse into the body of all they read the balm of salvation, that when the people consult for the present life, they may be admonished,—stealthily and skilfully invaded with admonition,—of the life to come. So that, until the servants and ministers of the living God do pass the limits of pulpit theology and pulpit exhortation, and take weapons in their hand, gathered out of every region in which the life of man or his faculties are interested, they shall never have religion triumph and domineer in a country, as becometh her high original, her native

majesty, and her eternity of freely-bestowed well-being.

To this the ministers of religion should bear their attention to be called, for until they thus acquire the pass-word which is to convey them into every man's encampment, they speak to that man from a distance, and at disadvantage. It is but a parley; it is no conference, nor treaty, nor business-like communication. To this end, they must discover new vehicles for conveying the truth as it is in Jesus into the minds of the people; poetical, historical, scientific, political, and sentimental vehicles. For in each of these regions some of the population are domesticated with all their affections; who are as dear in God's sight as are others; and why they should not become at, why means should not be taken to come at them, can any good reason be assigned? They prepare men for teaching gipsies, for teaching bargemen, for teaching miners; men who understand their ways of conceiving and estimating truth; why not train others for teaching imaginative men and political men, and legal men, and scientific men, who bear the world in hand? and, having got the key to their several chambers of delusion

and resistance, why not enter in and debate the matter with their souls, that they may be left without excuse? Meanwhile, I think, we ministers are without excuse.

Moved by these feelings, I have set the example of two new methods of handling religious truth—*the Oration*, and *the Argument*; the one intended to be after the manner of the antient Oration, the best vehicle for addressing the minds of men which the world hath seen, far beyond the Sermon, of which the very name hath learned to inspire drowsiness and tedium; the other after the manner of the antient Apologies, with this difference, that it is pleaded not before any judicial bar, but before the tribunal of the human mind. The former are but specimens; the latter, though most imperfect, is intended to be complete. The Orations are placed first in the volume, because the Oracles of God, which they exalt, are the foundation of the Argument, which brings to reason and common sense one of the revelations which they contain.

For the choice of these titles, *Oration* and *Argument*, I need to make no apology, and I am entitled to no censure. The question is,

Are they Orations or are they Sermons? Now, according to my notion of the Sermon (which I think is the common one), it ought to be the exposition and enforcement of a doctrine of Scripture founded upon some particular text, and following the approved method of division and sub-division. These have no such intention; they are as purely Orations, or Addresses to move and persuade men upon a particular point, as any of the antient or modern models. And it would have been absurd, totally absurd, to have given them any other name. In like manner, if the Argument be not a regularly constructed argument, let its irregularities and defective parts be pointed out; but merely to object that it shall not so be named, is nothing but another evidence of the poverty-struck invention of this age in things religious, and its resolution to remain for ever in its miserable poverty. The world, the thirsty spirit of the world, will never be refreshed until more various vessels for containing and serving out the waters of life be discovered and made use of.

For criticism I have given most plentiful occasion, and I deprecate it not; for it is the

free agitation of questions that brings the truth to light. It has also been my lot to have a good deal of it where I could not meet it, and if I get a good deal more I will not grumble, for a book is the property of the Public, to do with it what they like. The Author's care of it is finished when he hath given it birth; the people are responsible for the rest: And having besought the guidance of the Almighty and his blessing very often, I have nothing to beseech of men, but that they would look to themselves, and have mercy upon their own souls.

TO THE

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, GLASGOW.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I thank GOD, who directed you to hear one of my Discourses when I had made up my mind to leave my native land for solitary travel in foreign parts. That dispensation brought me acquainted with your good and tender-hearted nature, whose splendid accomplishments I knew already; and you now live in the memory of my heart more than in my admiration. While I laboured as your assistant, my labours were never weary, they were never enough to express my thankfulness to God for having associated me with such a man, and my affection to the man with whom I was associated. I now labour in another field, among a people whom I love, and over whom God hath, by signs un-

equivocal, already blessed my ministry. You go to labour likewise in another vineyard, where may the Lord bless your retired meditations as he hath blessed your active operations. And may He likewise watch over the flock of our mutual solicitude, now about to fall into other hands. The Lord be with you and your household, and render unto you manifold for the blessings which you have rendered unto me. I could say much about these Orations, which I dedicate to you; but I will not mingle with any literary or theological discussion this pure tribute of affection and gratitude, which I render to you before the world, as I have already done into your private ear.

I am,

My honoured Friend,

Your's,

In the bonds of the Gospel,

EDW. IRVING.

Caledonian Church,
Hatton Garden.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

AN ARGUMENT,

IN NINE PARTS.

ORATIONS.

ORATION I.

JOHN V. 39. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THE PREPARATION FOR CONSULTING THE ORACLES OF GOD.

THERE was a time when each revelation of the word of God had an introduction into this earth which neither permitted men to doubt whence it came, nor wherefore it was sent. If, at the giving of each several truth, a star was not lighted up in heaven, as at the birth of the Prince of truth, there was done upon the earth a wonder, to make her children listen to the message of their Maker. The Almighty made bare his arm; and, through mighty acts shewn by his holy servants, gave demonstration of his truth, and found for it a sure place among the other matters of human knowledge and belief.

But now the miracles of God have ceased, and Nature, secure and unmolested, is no longer called on for testimonies to her Creator's voice. No burning bush draws the footsteps to his

presence chamber; no invisible voice holds the ear awake; no hand cometh forth from the obscure to write his purposes in letters of flame. The vision is shut up, and the testimony is sealed, and the word of the Lord is ended, and this solitary volume, with its chapters and verses, is the sum total of all for which the chariot of heaven made so many visits to the earth, and the Son of God himself tabernacled and dwelt among us.

The truth which it contains once dwelt undivulged in the bosom of God; and, on coming forth to take its place among things revealed, the heavens and the earth, and Nature through all her chambers gave it reverent welcome. Beyond what it reveals, the mysteries of the future are unknown. To gain it acceptation and currency the noble company of martyrs testified unto the death. The general assembly of the first-born in heaven made it the day-star of their hopes, and the pavilion of their peace. Its every sentence is charmed with the power of God, and powerful to the everlasting salvation of souls.

Having our minds filled with these thoughts of the primeval divinity of revealed Wisdom when she dwelt in the bosom of God, and was of his eternal self a part, long before he prepared the heavens or set a compass upon the face of the deep; revolving also how by the space of four thousand years every faculty of mute Nature did solemn obeisance to this daughter of the divine mind, whenever he pleased to commission her

forth to the help of mortals; and further meditating upon the delights which she had of old with the sons of men, the height of heavenly temper to which she raised them, and the offspring of magnanimous deeds which these two—the wisdom of God, and the soul of man—did engender between themselves—meditating, I say, upon these mighty topics, our soul is smitten with grief and shame to remark how, in this latter day, she hath fallen from her high estate; and fallen along with her the great and noble character of men. Or if there be still a few names, as of the Missionary MARTYN, to emulate the saints of old—how to the commonalty of Christians her oracles have fallen into a household commonness, and her visits into a cheap familiarity; while by the multitude she is mistaken for a minister of terror sent to oppress poor mortals with moping melancholy, and do a deadly office upon the happiness of human kind!

For there is no express stirring up of faculties to meditate her high and heavenly strains—nor formal sequestration of the mind from all other concerns on purpose for her special entertainment—nor pause of solemn seeking and solemn waiting for a spiritual frame, before entering and listening to the voice of the Almighty's wisdom. Who feels the sublime dignity there is in a saying fresh descended from the porch of heaven? Who feels the awful weight there is in the least iota that hath dropped from the lips of God? Who feels the thrilling fear or trembling hope

there is in words whereon the eternal destinies of himself do hang? Who feels the swelling tide of gratitude within his breast, for redemption and salvation, instead of flat despair and everlasting retribution? Or, who, in perusing the word of God, is captivated through all his faculties, transported through all his emotions, and through all his energies of action wound up? To say the best, it is done as other duties are wont to be done: and, having reached the rank of a daily, formal duty, the perusal of the Word hath reached its noblest place. That is, that which is the guide and spur of all duty, the necessary aliment of Christian life, the first and the last of Christian knowledge and Christian feeling, hath, to speak the best, degenerated in these days to stand rank and file among those duties whereof it is parent, preserver and commander. And to speak not the best but the fair and common truth, this book, the offspring of the divine mind, and the perfection of heavenly wisdom, is permitted to lie from day to day, perhaps from week to week, unheeded and unperused; never welcome to our happy, healthy and energetic moods; admitted, if admitted at all, in seasons of sickness, feeble-mindedness, and disabling sorrow. Yea, that which was sent to be a spirit of ceaseless joy and hope, within the heart of man, is treated as the enemy of happiness, and the murderer of enjoyment: and eyed askance, as the remembrancer of death and the very messenger of hell!

Oh! if books had but tongues to speak their

wrongs, then might this book well exclaim—Hear O heavens! and give ear O earth! I came from the love and embrace of God, and mute Nature, to whom I brought no boon, did me rightful homage. To man I came, and my words were to the children of men. I disclosed to you the mysteries of hereafter, and the secrets of the throne of God. I set open to you the gates of salvation, and the way of eternal life, heretofore unknown. Nothing in heaven did I withhold from your hope and ambition; and upon your earthly lot I poured the full horn of divine providence and consolation. But ye requited me with no welcome, ye held no festivity on my arrival: ye sequester me from happiness and heroism, closeting me with sickness and infirmity; ye make not of me, nor use me for your guide to wisdom and prudence, but press me into your list of duties, and withdraw me to a mere corner of your time; and most of ye set me at nought and utterly disregard me. I came, the fullness of the knowledge of God; angels delighted in my company, and desired to dive into my secrets. But ye, mortals, place masters over me, subjecting me to the discipline and dogmatism of men, and tutoring me in your schools of learning. I came, not to be silent in your dwellings, but to speak welfare to you and to your children. I came to rule, and my throne to set up in the hearts of men. Mine antient residence was the bosom of God; no residence will I have but the soul of an immortal; and if you had entertained me, I should have pos-

sessed you of the peace which I had with God, "when I was with him and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.—Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they cry unto me but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me."

From this cheap estimation and wanton neglect of God's counsel, and from the terror of this curse consequent thereon, we have resolved, in the strength of God, to do our endeavour to deliver this congregation of his intelligent and worshiping people—an endeavour which we make with a full perception of the difficulties to be overcome on every side, within no less than without the sacred pale; and upon which we enter with the utmost diffidence of our powers, yet with the full purpose of straining them to the utmost according to the measure with which it hath pleased God to endow us. And do thou, O Lord, from whom cometh the perception of truth, vouchsafe to thy servant an unction from thine own Spirit who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God—and vouchsafe to thy people "the hearing ear and the understanding heart, that they may hear and understand and their souls may live!"

Before the Almighty made his appearance upon Sinai, there were awful precursors sent to prepare his way: while he abode in sight there were solemn ceremonies and a strict ritual of attendance; when he departed the whole camp set itself to conform unto his revealed will. Likewise, before the Saviour appeared, with his better law, there was a noble procession of seers and prophets who descried and warned the world of his coming: when he came there were solemn announcements in the heavens and on the earth: he did not depart without due honours; and there followed on his departure a succession of changes and alterations, which are still in progress, and will continue in progress till the world end. This may serve to teach us that a revelation of the Almighty's will makes demand for these three things on the part of those to whom it is revealed. A DUE PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING IT. A DILIGENT ATTENTION TO IT WHILE IT IS DISCLOSING. A STRICT OBSERVANCE OF IT WHEN IT IS DELIVERED.

In the whole book of the Lord's revelations you will search in vain for one which is devoid of these necessary parts. Witness the awe-struck Isaiah, while the Lord displayed before him the sublime pomp of his presence, and, not content with overpowering the frail sense of the prophet, despatched a seraph to do the ceremonial of touching his lips with hallowed fire, all before he uttered one word into his astonished ear. Witness the majestic apparition to St. John, in the Apocalypse, of all the emblematical glory of the Son of

man, allowed to take silent effect upon the apostle's spirit, and prepare it for the revelation of things to come. These heard with all their absorbed faculties, and with all their powers addressed them to the bidding of the Lord. But if this was in aught flinched from, witness in the persecution of the prophet Jonah the fearful issues which ensued. From the presence of the Lord he could not flee. Fain would he have escaped to the uttermost parts of the earth; but in the mighty waters the terrors of the Lord fell on him; and when ingulfed in the deep, and entombed in the monster of the deep, still the Lord's word was upon the obdurate prophet, who had no rest, not the rest of the grave, till he had fulfilled it to the very uttermost.

Now—judging that, every time we open the pages of this holy book, we are to be favoured with no less than a communication from on high, in substance the same with those whereof we have detailed the three distinct and several parts—we conceive it due to the majesty of Him who speaks, that we, in like manner, discipline our spirits with a due preparation, and have them in a proper frame, before we listen to the voice. That, while it is disclosing to us the important message, we be wrapt in full attention. And, that when it hath disburdened itself into our opened and enlarged spirits, we proceed forthwith to the business of its fulfilment, whithersoever and to whatsoever it summon us forth. Upon each of which three duties, incumbent upon one who

would not forego the benefit of a heavenly message, we shall discourse apart, addressing ourselves in this discourse to the *first* mentioned of the three.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT.—When God uttereth his voice, says the Psalmist, coals of fire are kindled; the hills melt down like wax, the earth quakes, and deep proclaims it unto hollow deep. This same voice, which the stubborn elements cannot withstand, the children of Israel having heard but once, prayed that it might not be spoken to them any more. These sensible images of the Creator have now vanished, and we are left alone, in the deep recesses of the meditative mind, to discern his comings forth. No trump of heaven now speaketh in the world's ear. No angelic conveyancer of Heaven's will taketh shape from the vacant air, and, having done his errand, retireth into his airy habitation. No human messenger putteth forth his miraculous hand to heal Nature's immedicable wounds, winning for his words a silent and astonished audience. Majesty and might no longer precede the oracles of Heaven. They lie silent and unobtrusive, wrapped up in their little compass—one volume, amongst many, innocently handed to and fro, having no distinction but that in which our mustered thoughts are enabled to invest them. The want of solemn preparation and circumstantial pomp the imagination of the mind hath now to supply. The presence of the Deity, and the authority of his voice, our thought-

ful spirits must discern. Conscience must supply the terrors that went before him; and the brightness of his coming, which the sense can no longer behold, the heart, ravished with his word, must feel.

For this solemn vocation of all her powers to do her Maker honour, and give him welcome, it is, at the very least, necessary that the soul stand absolved from every call. Every foreign influence or authority arising out of the world, or the things of the world, should be burst when about to stand before the Fountain of all authority. Every argument, every invention, every opinion of man forgot, when about to approach to the Father and oracle of all intelligence. And as subjects, when their prince honours them with invitations, are held disengaged though pre-occupied with a thousand appointments—so upon an audience fixed and about to be holden with the King of kings, it well becomes the honoured mortal to break loose from all thraldom of men and things, and be arrayed in liberty of thought and action, to drink in the rivers of his pleasure, and to perform the commissions of his lips.

Now, far otherwise it hath appeared to us that Christians, as well as worldly men, come to this most august occupation of listening to the word of God, pre-occupied and prepossessed, inclining to it a partial ear, a straitened understanding, and a disaffected will.

The Christian public are prone to pre-occupy themselves with the admiration of those opinions

by which they stand distinguished as a church or sect from other Christians; and instead of being quite unfettered to receive the whole council of the divinity, they are prepared to welcome it no farther than as it bears upon and stands with opinions which they already favour. To this prejudgment the early use of catechisms mainly contributes, which, however serviceable in their place, have the disadvantage of presenting the truth in a form altogether different from what it occupies in the Word itself. In the one it is presented to the intellect chiefly, (and in our catechism to an intellect of a very subtle order;) in the other it is presented more frequently to the heart, to the affections, to the imitation, to the fancy, and to all the faculties of the soul. In early youth, which is so applied to with those compilations, an association takes place between religion and intellect, and a divorcement of religion from the other powers of the inner man. Which derangement, judging from observation and experience, it is exceeding difficult to put to rights in after life; and so it comes to pass that, in listening to the oracles of God the intellect is chiefly awake, and the better parts of the message—those which address the heart and its affections, those which dilate and enlarge our imaginations of the Godhead, and those which speak to the various sympathies of our nature—we are, by the injudicious use of these narrow epitomes disqualified to receive.

In the train of these comes Controversy, with

his rough voice and unmeek aspect, to disqualify the soul for a full and fair audience of her Maker's word! The points of the faith we have been called on to defend, or which are reputable with our party, assume in our esteem an importance disproportionate to their importance in the Word, which we come to relish chiefly when it goes to sustain them; and the Bible is hunted for arguments and Texts of controversy which are treasured up for future service. The solemn stillness which the soul should hold before her Maker, so favourable to meditation and rapt communion with the throne of God, is destroyed at every turn by suggestion of what is orthodox and evangelical—where all is orthodox and evangelical, the spirit of the reader becomes lean, being fed with abstract truths and formal propositions; his temper ungenial, being ever disturbed with controversial suggestions; his prayers undevout recitals of his opinions; his discourse technical announcements of his faith. Intellect, cold intellect, hath the sway over heaven-ward devotion and holy fervours. Man, contentious man, hath the attention which the unsearchable God should undivided have; and the fine full harmony of Heaven's melodious voice, which, heard apart, were sufficient to lap the soul in ecstasies unspeakable, is jarred and interfered with; and the heavenly spell is broken by the recurring conceits, sophisms, and passions of men. Now truly, an utter degradation it is of the Godhead to have his word in league with that of any man, or any

council of men. What matter to me whether it be the Pope, or any work of the human mind that is exalted to the equality of God? If any helps are to be imposed for the understanding, or safeguarding or sustaining of the word, why not the help of statues and pictures for my devotion? Therefore, while the warm fancies of the Southerns have given their idolatry to the ideal forms of noble art—let us Northerns beware we give not our idolatry to the cold and coarse abstractions of human intellect.

For the pre-occupations of worldly minds—they are not to be reckoned up, being manifold as their favourite passions and pursuits. One thing only can be said—that before coming to the oracles of God, they are not pre-occupied with the expectation and fear of Him. No chord in their heart is in unison with things unseen; no moments set apart for religious thought and meditation; no anticipations of the honoured interview; nor prayers of preparation, like that of Daniel, before Gabriel was sent to teach him; nor devoutness like that of Cornelius, before the celestial visitation; nor fasting like that of Peter, before the revelation of the glory of the Gentiles! To minds thus untuned to holiness the words of God find no entrance—striking heavy on the ear, seldom making way to the understanding—almost never to the heart. To spirits hot with conversation, perhaps heady with argument, uncomposed by solemn thought but ruffled and in uproar from the concourse of worldly interests—the sacred page being spread out, its accents are drowned in the

noise which hath not yet subsided within the breast. All the awe, and pathos, and awakened consciousness of a divine approach, impressed upon the antients by the procession of solemnities —is to worldly men without a substitute. They have not solicited themselves to be in readiness. In an usual mood and a vulgar frame they come to God's word as to any other composition—reading it without any active imaginations about Him who speaks; feeling no awe of a sovereign Lord, nor care of a tender Father, nor devotion to a merciful Saviour. Nowise depressed out of their wonted independence—nor humiliated before the King of kings—no prostrations of the soul—nor falling at his feet as dead—no exclamation, as of Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am of unclean lips!" —nor suit, "Send me;"—nor fervent ejaculation of welcome, as of Samuel, "Lord, speak, for thy servant heareth!" They feel towards his word much as to the word of an equal. No wonder it should fail of happy influence upon spirits which have, as it were on purpose, disqualified themselves for its benefits, by removing from the regions of thought and feeling, which it accords with, into other regions, which it is of too severe dignity to affect, otherwise than with stern menace and direful foreboding! If they would have it bless them, and do them good, they must change their manner of approaching it; and endeavour to bring themselves into that prepared and collected and reverential frame which becomes an interview with the High and Holy One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity.

Having thus spoken without equivocation, and we hope without offence, to the contractedness and pre-occupation with which Christians and worldly men are apt to come to the perusal of the word of God, we shall now set forth the two master feelings under which we should address ourselves to the sacred occupation.

It is a good custom inherited from the hallowed days of Scottish piety, and in our cottages still preserved, though in our cities generally given up, to preface the morning and evening worship of the family with a short invocation of blessing from the Lord. This is in unison with the practice and recommendation of pious men, never to open the divine Word without a silent invocation of the divine Spirit. But no ejaculation to Heaven is of any virtue, save as it is the expression of certain pious sentiments with which the mind is full and overflowing. And, therefore, instead of setting forth any forms of intercession for a divine understanding to accompany the reading of the divine Word, it seemeth better that I impress upon your minds those sentiments, which will of their own accord prompt the heart to feel the proper frame, and the tongue to utter the suitable request.

Of those sentiments which befit the mind that cometh into conference with its Maker, the first and most prevailing should be gratitude for his having ever condescended to hold commerce with such wretched and fallen creatures. Gratitude not only expressing itself in proper terms, but possessing the mind with an abiding and over-mastering mood, under which it shall sit impressed

the whole duration of the interview. Such an emotion as cannot utter itself in language—though by language it indicate its presence—but preserves us in a devout and adoring frame, while the Lord is uttering his voice. Go, visit a desolate widow with consolation and help and fatherhood of her orphan children—do it again and again—and your presence, the sound of your approaching footstep, the soft utterance of your voice, the very mention of your name—will come to dilate her heart with a fulness which defies her tongue to utter, but speaks by the tokens of a swimming eye, and clasped hands, and fervent ejaculations to heaven upon your head! No less copious acknowledgment to God, the author of our well-being and the father of our better hopes, ought we to feel when his word discloseth to us the excesses of his love. Though a veil be now cast over the Majesty which speaks, it is the voice of the Eternal which we hear, coming in soft cadences to win our favour, yet omnipotent as the voice of the thunder, and overpowering as the rushing of many waters. And though the veil of the future intervene between our hand and the promised goods, still are they from His lips who speaks and it is done, who commandeth and all things stand fast. With no less emotion, therefore, should this book be opened, than if, like him in the Apocalypse, you saw the voice which spake; or like him in the trance, you were, into the third heavens translated, companying and communing with the realities of glory, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Far and foreign from such an opened and awakened bosom is that cold and formal hand which is generally laid upon the sacred volume; that unfeeling and unimpressive tone with which its accents are pronounced; and that listless and incurious ear into which its blessed sounds are received. How can you, thus unimpassioned, hold communion with themes in which every thing awful, vital, and endearing, do meet together! Why is not curiosity, curiosity ever hungry, on edge to know the doings and intentions of Jehovah the King of kings? Why is not interest, interest ever awake, on tiptoe to hear the future destiny of yourselves? Why is not the heart that panteth over the world after love and friendship, overpowered with the full tide of the divine acts and expressions of love? Where is Nature gone when she is not moved with the tender mercy of Christ? Methinks the affections of men are fallen into the yellow leaf. Of our poets which charm the world's ear, who is he that initeth a song unto his God? Some will tune their harps to sensual pleasures, and by the enchantment of their genius well nigh commend their unholy themes to the imagination of saints. Others, to the high and noble sentiments of the heart, will sing of domestic joys and happy unions, casting around sorrow the radiancy of virtue, and bodying forth, in undying forms, the short-lived visions of joy! Others have enrolled themselves the high priests of mute Nature's charms, enchanting her echoes with their minstrelsy, and peopling her solitudes with the bright

creatures of their fancy. But when, since the days of the blind master of English song, hath any poured forth a lay worthy of the Christian theme? Nor in philosophy, "the palace of the soul," have men been more mindful of their Maker. The flowers of the garden and the herbs of the field have their unwearied devotees, crossing the ocean, wayfaring in the desert, and making devout pilgrimages to every region of Nature, for offerings to their patron muse. The rocks, from their residences among the clouds to their deep rests in the dark bowels of the earth, have a most bold and venturous priesthood; who see in their rough and flinty faces a more delectable image to adore than in the revealed countenance of God. And the political welfare of the world is a very Moloch, who can at any time command his hecatomb of human victims. But the revealed sapience of God, to which the harp of David and the prophetic lyre of Isaiah were strung, the Prudence of God which the wisest of men coveted after, preferring it to every gift which Heaven could confer —and the eternal Intelligence himself in human form, and the Unction of the Holy One which abideth,—these the common heart of man hath forsaken, and refused to be charmed withal.

I testify, that there ascendeth not from earth, a Hosannah of her children to bear witness in the ear of upper regions to the wonderful manifestations of her God! From a few scattered hamlets, in a small portion of her wide territory, a small voice ascendeth like the voice of one cry-

ing in the wilderness. But to the service of our general Preserver there is no concourse, from Dan unto Beersheba, of our people; the greater part of whom, after two thousand years of apostolic commission, know not the testimonies of our God; and the multitude of those who do, reject or despise them!

But, to return from this lamentation, which, may God hear, who doth not disregard the cries of his afflicted people! With the full sense of obligation to the Giver, combine a humble sense of your own incapacity to value and to use the gift of his Holy Oracles. Having no taste whatever for the mean estimates which are made, and the coarse invectives that are vented against human nature, which though true in the main, are often in the manner so unfeeling and triumphant, as to reveal hot zeal, rather than tender and deep sorrow, we will not give in to this popular strain. And yet it is a truth, by experience revealed, that though there be in man most noble faculties, and a nature restless after the knowledge and truth of things—there are, towards God, and his revealed will, an indisposition and a regardlessness, which the most tender and enlightened consciences are the most ready to acknowledge. Of our emancipated youth who bound after the knowledge of the visible works of God, and the gratification of the various instincts of nature, how few betake themselves at all, how few absorb themselves with the study and obedience of the word of God! And when, by God's visitation, we address ourselves

to the task, how slow is our progress and how imperfect our performance! So true is it that Nature is unwilling to the subject of the Scriptures. The soul is previously possessed with adverse interests; the world hath laid an embargo upon her faculties, and monopolized them to herself; old Habit hath perhaps added his almost incurable callousness; and the enemy of God and man is skilful to defend what he hath already won. So circumstanced, and every man is so circumstanced, we come to the audience of the word of God, and listen in worse tune than a wanton to a sermon, or a hardened knave to a judicial reprimand. Our understanding is prepossessed with a thousand idols either of the world religious or irreligious—which corrupt the reading of the word into a straining of the text to their service; and when it will not strain, cause it to be skimmed, and perhaps despised, or hated. Such a thing as a free and unlimited reception of all the parts of Scripture into the mind, is a thing most rare to be met with, and when met with, will be found the result of many a sore submission of Nature's opinions, as well as of Nature's likings.

But the Word, as hath been said, is not for the intellect alone, but for the heart, and for the will. Now if any one be so wedded to his own candour as to think he doth accept the divine truth unabated—surely no one will flatter himself into the belief that his heart is already attuned and enlarged for all divine affections, or his will in readiness for all divine commandments. The man

who thus misdeems of himself, must, if his opinion were just, be like a sheet of fair paper, unblotted, unwritten on; whereas all men are already occupied, to very fulness, with other opinions, and attachments, and desires, than the Word reveals. We do not grow Christians by the same culture by which we grow men, otherwise—what need of divine revelation, and divine assistance? But being unacquainted from the womb with God, and attached to what is seen and felt, through early and close acquaintance, we are ignorant and detached from what is unseen and unfelt. The Word is a novelty to our nature, its truths fresh truths, its affections fresh affections, its obedience a new obedience, which have to master and put down the truths, affections, and obedience gathered from the apprehension of Nature, and the commerce of worldly life. Therefore, there needeth, in one that would be served from this storehouse of truth opened by heaven, a disrelish of his old acquisitions, and a preference of the new, a simple, child-like teachableness, an allowance of ignorance and error, with whatever else beseems an anxious learner. Coming to the word of God, we are like children brought into the conversations of experienced men; and we should humbly listen and reverently inquire: or we are like raw rustics introduced into high and polished life, and we should unlearn our coarseness, and copy the habits of the station:—nay, we are like offenders caught, and for amendment committed to the bosom of honourable society, with the

power of regaining our lost condition, and inheriting honour and trust—therefore we should walk softly and tenderly, covering our former reproach with modesty and humbleness, hasting to redeem our reputation by distinguished performances, against offence doubly guarded, doubly watchful for opportunities, to demonstrate our recovered goodness.

These two sentiments—devout veneration of God for his unspeakable gift, and deep distrust of our own capacity to estimate and use it aright—will generate in the mind a constant aspiration after the guidance and instruction of a Higher Power. The first sentiment of goodness remembered, emboldening us to draw near to Him who first drew near to us, and who with Christ will not refuse us any gift. The second sentiment, of weakness remembered, teaching us our need, and prompting us by every interest of religion and every feeling of helplessness to seek of him who hath said, "If any one lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." The soul which under these two master feelings cometh to read, shall not read without profit. Every new revelation, feeding his gratitude and nourishing his sense of former ignorance, will confirm the emotions he is under, and carry them onward to an unlimited dimension. Such a one will prosper in the way; enlargement of the inner man will be his portion, and establishment in the truth his exceeding great reward; affection to the Godhead will lead him on; and the strength which

sustaineth the humble will be his reward.' "In the strength of the Lord shall his right hand get victory—even in the name of the Lord of Hosts. His soul also shall flourish with the fruits of righteousness from the seed of the Word, which liveth and abideth for ever."

Thus delivered from prepossessions of all other masters, and arrayed in the raiment of humility and love, the soul should advance to the meeting of her God; and she should call a muster of all her faculties, and have all her poor graces in attendance, and any thing she knows of his excellent works and exalted ways she should summon up to her remembrance: her understanding she should quicken, her memory refresh, her imagination stimulate, her affections cherish, and her conscience arouse. All that is within her should be stirred up, her whole glory should awake, and her whole beauty display itself, for the meeting of her King. As his hand-maiden she should meet him; his own handy-work, though sore defaced, yet seeking restoration; his humble, because offending servant—yet nothing slavish, though humble—nothing superstitious, though devout—nothing tame, though modest in her demeanour; but quick, and ready, all addressed and wound up for her Maker's will.

How different the ordinary proceeding of Christians, who with timorous, mistrustful spirits, with an abeyance of intellect and a dwarfish reduction of their natural powers, enter to the conference of the word of God! The natural powers of man

are to be mistrusted, doubtless, as the willing instruments of the evil one; but they must be honoured also as the necessary instruments of the Spirit of God; whose operation is a dream, if it be not through knowledge, intellect, conscience, and action. Now Christians, heedless of this grand regeneration of the mighty instruments of thought and action, at the same time coveting hard after holy attainments, do often resign the mastery of themselves, are at once taken into the current of the religious world—whirling around the eddy of some popular leader—and so drifted, I will not say from godliness, but drifted certainly from that noble, manly, and independent course, which under steerage of the word of God, they might have safely pursued for the dignity and salvation of their immortal souls. Meanwhile these popular leaders, finding no necessity for strenuous endeavours and high science in the ways of God, but having a gathering host to follow them, deviate from the ways of deep and penetrating thought—refuse the contest with the literary and accomplished enemies of the faith—bring a contempt upon the cause in which mighty men did formerly gird themselves to the combat—and so cast the stumbling-block of a mistaken paltriness between enlightened men and the cross of Christ! So far from this simple-mindedness (but its proper name is feeble-mindedness,) Christians should be—as aforetime in this island they were wont to be—the princes of human intellect, the lights of the world, the salt of the political and social state. And till they come forth from the

swaddling bands in which foreign schools have girt them, and walk boldly upon the high places of human understanding, they will never obtain that influence in the upper regions of knowledge and power of which unfortunately they have not the apostolic unction to be in quest. Nor will ever become the master and commanding spirits of the time, until they cast off the wrinkled and withered skin of an obsolete age, and clothe themselves with intelligence as with a garment, and bring forth the fruits of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Mistake us not; for we steer in a narrow, very narrow channel, with rocks of popular prejudice on every side. While we thus invocate, to the reading of the Word, the highest strains of the human soul, mistake us not as derogating from the office of the Spirit of God. Far be it from any Christian, much farther from any Christian pastor, to withdraw from God the honour which is everywhere his due, but there, most of all his due where the human mind laboured alone for thousands of years, and laboured with no success—viz. the regeneration of itself, and its restoration to the lost semblance of the divinity.—Oh! let him be reverently inquired after, devoutly waited on, and most thankfully acknowledged in every step of progress from the soul's fresh awakening out of her dark oblivious sleep—even to her ultimate attainment upon earth and full accomplishment for heaven. And that there may be a fuller choir of awakened men to advance his honour and glory

here on earth—and hereafter in heaven above—let the saints bestir themselves like angels, and the ministers of religion like archangels strong!—And now at length let us have a demonstration made of all that is noble in thought, and generous in action, and devoted in piety, for bestirring this lethargic age, and breaking the bands of hell, and redeeming the whole world to the service of its God and King!

As He doth know this to be the desire and aim of the preceding Discourse, so may he prosper it to the salvation of many souls, that to his poor servant, covered over with iniquities, may flow the forgiveness and honour of those who turn many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of the living God.

ORATION II.

JOHN V. 39. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THE MANNER OF CONSULTING THE ORACLES OF GOD.

God, being ever willing and ever ready to second and succeed his Word, and having a most longing anxiety for the recovery of all men; when his Word fails of converting the soul, (as it doth too often) that failure cannot be due to any omission upon his part, but to some omission or transgression upon ours. If any one, however, incline to refer the failure to a want of willingness, or a withholding of power, upon the part of God, whereof it is not given unto man to discover or remove the cause—then in this his opinion, such a one must needs remain beyond the reach of help. If he think that, notwithstanding of revelation, we are yet in the dark as to the putting forth of divine power—that to a sinner's salvation there is an element still undisclosed—that the information delivered in the Scriptures is not enough, and the means there prescribed not adequate, and the divine blessing there promised not to be surely calculated on; but that over and beyond all, there is something to be tarried for—then, for one so opinioned, there is nothing but to tarry.

For except by what is revealed how are the councils of the Eternal known? and if revelation do not discover the way in which God may assuredly be found, what mortal or immortal can?—and if there be a gap between our present habitations and the Holiest of all, who can fill it up? and if one possessed of all God's revelations do still hold himself unaccomplished for the finding of God, who in heaven or earth can help him?—and, in short, if employing God's revelation as God himself directs it to be employed, and in the spirit proper to each, taking every measure therein appointed, we may nevertheless be remote from success, and nothing sure of our aim, then, what less shall we say, but that this book, the light and hope of a fallen world, is an idle meteor which mocks pursuit, and may be left to seek its way back into the hiding-place of the Almighty's council from which it hath come forth to man in vain!

But if, upon the other hand, any one believe that God's favour cometh not at random, nor by a way unknown, but may be calculated on in the way that God himself hath revealed it to proceed, and doth distil like the dew falling unseen, and rest upon every one who longeth after it,—and that our backward state cometh not of any darkness in the Word, or abstinence in the Spirit of God, but of our own withdrawing from the light and fighting against the truth—who giveth to God thankfulness and praise, taking to himself all the blame—then, with such a one, we are happy we can freely discourse, and, by

God's blessing, we hope to help him onward in the way everlasting.

Yet, for the sake of disabusing the others who stand looking for a dawning they know not whence nor when, let me interrogate any Christian, how he won his way from former darkness to present light? Not by knowledge alone of what the Word contains. True. By what then? by earnest prayer. But what taught him, what encouraged him to pray? Was it not certain revelations in the Word? Not by confidence in his knowledge or his strength, but by distrust of both. True. But what taught him to distrust himself? Was it not certain revelations in the Word? Not by bold and urgent endeavours of his own, but by humble endeavours rested upon hope of heavenly aid. True. But what taught him to bridle his impetuosity and expect superior aid? Was it not certain revelations in the Word? And, to sum up all, how doth that Christian know, save by the image of righteousness revealed in the Word, that he is not yet in the bondage of his sins, but standeth sure in the liberty of Christ? Why then, in the name of plain and honest dealing, will you hesitate to acknowledge and asseverate, for the behoof of lingering and mistrustful men, that in God's revelations, rightly used, there is a reservoir of knowledge and direction, ample enough to feed the famished spirit of the world; whence every sinner may derive to himself a satisfying stream to refresh his present faintness, and to follow his footsteps through the tedious wilderness of life.

Therefore do we feel upon a useful and a hopeful topic, while we endeavour to discover what it is which hinders the Scripture from its full efficacy in deriving to us who search them the regeneration of our souls, and their renewal in the whole image of God.

And without recurring to what hath been already said of the PREPARATION necessary for perusing aright the Word of God, we come at once to the perusal itself, and shall now, not without much distrust of our own, and intercession for heavenly power, endeavour to take account of the spirit and style in which it is wont to be perused amongst us, and of the spirit and style in which it ought to be perused. And being conscious that we have many convictions to express which chime not in with the temper of the times, and some sayings hard to be received by Christians discipled in modern schools, we ask your patience and Christian courtesy, and pray God for your consent and approbation.

The more ignorant sort of men, who entertain religion by a kind of hereditary reverence, as they do any other custom, take up the word of God at stated seasons, and afflict their spirits with the task of perusing it, and, to judge from a vacant face and an unawakened tone, and a facility of enduring interruption, it is often as truly inflicted upon the soul as ever penance was upon the flesh of a miserable monk. Or, upon another occasion, when one beholds mirth and jocularity at once go dumb for an act of worship, and revive again with fresh glee when

the act is over, one cannot help believing that it hath been task-work with many, if not with all. Holding of the same superstition is the practice of drawing to the Word in sickness, affliction, and approaching dissolution, as if a charm against the present evil, or an invocation of the future good. Against which and all other mortifications it were enough to quote that weighty sentence of Job, "Can a man be profitable to God, as one that is wise is profitable unto himself; or is it any profit to the Almighty that thou makest thy ways perfect?" Doubtless it is well pleasing to Him that his word is honoured, and that his name is magnified by the intelligent creatures which his hand hath formed; but he cannot endure to be approached with mere form, or served out of constraint. It is to be preferred above the creatures which he hath made that delights him; and to reign supremely in the soul; at all times to be held in reverence, and over all our actions to preside. Want of will to his service, impatience in its performance, joy when it is over, converts it into contempt, the more hateful because it is covered. The weakness and imperfections of our nature he will overlook, and, if besought, will by his Spirit remove; but guile and disguise and all hypocrisies his soul hateth, and cannot away with. And the studying his will being of no importance save to perform it in the face of all opposition from within and from without, therefore, of all conditions, sickness and affliction—when we are disabled from action, and in part also from thought—are it seems

to me, the least proper for the perusal of the Word. If it cannot overmaster us when we are clothed in all our strength, then it is a poor victory to overcome us when disease hath already prostrated our better faculties. Then chiefly to take concern about the name and the word of God, is a symptom of our weakness, not of our devotion. Take heed then ye present to the Lord no lame nor maimed offerings, or put off your allegiance with well-timed and well-mannered acts of occasional attendance; or think to satisfy Him with painful instances of self-denial, who is only gratified when the service of his creatures goes with all their heart and soul, and yields to them the height of self-enjoyment.

From this extreme of narrow and enforced attendance upon the Word of God, there are many who run into the other extreme of constant consultation, and cannot pass an evening together in conversation or enjoyment of any kind, but they call for the Bible and the exposition of its truths by an able hand. That it becomes a family night and morning to peruse the word—and that it becomes men to assemble themselves together to hear it expounded—is a truth; while at the same time it is no less a truth, that it is a monkish custom, and a most ignorant slavery, to undervalue all intellectual, moral, or refreshing converse, for the purpose of hearing some favourite of the priesthood set forth his knowledge or his experience, though it be upon a holy subject. It is not that *he* may talk, but that *we all* may talk as becometh saints; it is not that we may hear the naked

truth, but that we may exhibit our sentiments and views of all subjects, our tempers in all encounters, to be consistent with the truth. It is not merely to try our patience in hearing, but to exercise all our graces, that we come together. Let the Word be appealed to, in order to justify our opinions and resolve our doubts. Let there be an occasion worthy of it: then let it be called in. But it is to muzzle free discourse, and banish useful topics, and interrupt the mind's refreshment, and bring in upon our manly and free-born way of life, the slavishness of a devotee, the coldness of a hermitage, and the formality of cloistered canons, thus to abolish the healthful pulses of unconstrained companionship, and the free disclosures of friendship, and the closer communion and fellowship of saints. Yet though thus we protest against the formality and deadness of such a custom, we are not prepared to condemn it, if it proceed from a pure thirst after divine teaching. If in private we have a still stronger relish for it than in the company of our friends—if in silent study we love its lessons no less than from the lips of our favourite pastor—then let the custom have free course, and let the Word be studied whenever we have opportunity, and whenever we can go to it with a common consent.

Against these two methods of communing with the word of God, whereof the one springs from the religious timidity of the world, the other from the religious timidity of Christians; the one a

penance, the other a weakness; we have little fear of carrying your judgment: but you will be alarmed when we carry our censure against the common spirit, of dealing with it as a duty. Not but that it is a duty to peruse the word of God, but that it is something infinitely higher. Duty means a verdict of conscience in its behalf. Now conscience is not an independent power, at the bidding of which the Word abides to be opened, and at its forbidding to continue sealed—but the Word, let conscience bid or forbid, stands forth dressed in its own awful sanctions "Believe and live"—"Believe not and die." If conscience have added her voice also, that is another sanction, but a sanction which was not needful to be superadded. When my Maker speaks, I am called to listen by a higher authority than the authority of my own self. I should make sure that it is my Maker who speaks—and for this let every faculty of reason and feeling do its part; but being assured that it is no other than his voice omnipotent, my whole soul must burst forth to give him attendance. There must be no demur for any verdict of any inward principle. Out of duty, out of love, out of adoration, out of joy, out of fear, out of my whole consenting soul, I must obey my Maker's call.

Duty, whose cold and artificial verdict, the God of infinite love is served withal, is a sentiment which the lowest relationships of life are not content with. Servant with master—child with teacher—friend with friend—when it comes to

the sentiment of duty, it is near its dissolution; and it never thrives or comes to good but when it rests upon well-tried trust and hearty regard; upon a love to our persons, and a confidence in our worth. And in the ties of nature, to parents, to children, to brethren, to husband and wife, there to be listened to out of cold constraint of duty, argues nature gone well nigh dead. There is a prompter consent, a deep sympathy of love, an over-stepping of all the limits of duty, a going even unto the death, which hardly satisfies the soul of such affection. What then shall we say of that closest of all relations—creature to Creator—which hath in it the germ of every other: the parental, for he formed us; the patronal, for he hath upheld us; the friendly, for in all our straits he hath befriended us; the loyal, for our safety is in his royal hand; and, which addeth the attachment to very self, "for we are ourselves his workmanship!"

To bind this tie, nothing will suffice but strong and stubborn necessity. Duty, in truth, is the very lowest conception of it—privilege is a higher—honour a higher, happiness and delight a higher still. But duty may be suspended by more pressing duty—privilege may be foregone and honour forgot, and the sense of happiness grow dull; but this of listening to His voice who plants the sense of duty, bestows privilege, honour and happiness, and our every other faculty, is before all these, and is equalled by nothing but the stubbornest necessity. We should hear His voice

as the sun and stars do in their courses, as the restful element of earth doth in its settled habitation. His voice is our law, which it is sacrilege, worse than rebellion, worse than parental rebellion, to disobey. He keeps the bands of our being together. His voice is the charter of our existence, which being disobeyed, we should run to annihilation, as our great father would have done, had not God in mercy given us a second chance, by erecting the platform of our being upon the new condition of probation, different from that of all known existences. Was it ever heard that the sun stopped in his path, but it was God that commanded? Was it ever heard that the sea forgot her instability, and stood apart in walled steadfastness, but it was God that commanded? Or that fire forgot to consume, but at the voice of God? Even so man should seek his Maker's word, as he loveth his well-being, or, like the unfallen creatures of God, as he loveth his very being—and labour in his obedience, without knowing or wishing to know aught beyond.

Necessity, therefore, I say, strong and eternal necessity is that which joins the link between the creature and the Creator, and makes man incumbent to the voice of God. To read the Word is no ordinary duty, but the mother of all duty, enlightening the eyes and converting the soul, and creating that very conscience to which we would subject it. We take our meat not by duty—the body must go down to dust without

it—therefore we persevere, because we love to exist. So also the word of God is the bread of life, the good of all spiritual action, without which the soul will go down—if not to instant annihilation—to the wretched abyss of spiritual and eternal death. But while we insist that the Scriptures should be perused out of the sense, not of an incumbency, but of a strong necessity, as being the issued orders of Him who upholdeth all things—we except against any idea of painfulness or force being therewith connected. We say necessity, to indicate the strength of the obligation, not its disagreeableness. But, in truth, there is no such feeling of disagreeableness, but the very opposite attached to every necessity of the Lord's appointing. Light is pleasant to the eyes, though the necessary element of vision. Food is pleasant to the body, though the staple necessary of life. Air is refreshing to the frame, though the necessary element of the breathing spirit. What so refreshing as the necessary of water to all animated existence? Sleep is the very balm of life to all creatures under the sun. Motion is from infancy to feeblest age the most recreating of things, save rest after motion. Every necessary instinct for preserving, or continuing, our existence hath in it a pleasure, when indulged in moderation; and the pain which attends excess is the sentinel in the way of danger, and like the sentinel's voice upon the brink of ruin should be considered as the pleasantest of all, though withdrawing us from the fondest pursuit. In like manner attendance on

God's law, though necessary to the soul as wine and milk to the body, will be found equally refreshing; though necessary as light to the eyes, will be found equally cheerful: though necessary as rest to the weary limbs, will be found equally refreshing to our spiritual strength.

A duty, which is at all times a duty, is a necessity: and this of listening to the voice of God can at no time be dispensed with, and therefore is a stark necessity. The life of the soul can at no time proceed without the present sense and obedience of its Maker's government. His law must be present and keep concert with our most inward thoughts; from which, as we can never dissolve connexion, so ought we never to dissolve connexion with the regulating voice of God. In all our rising emotions; in all our purposes conceiving; in all our thoughtful debates, holden upon the propriety of things; in all the secret councils of the bosom—the law of God should be consentaneous with the law of Nature, or rather should be umpire of the council, seeing Nature and Nature's laws have receded from the will of God, and become blinded to the best interests of our spiritual state. The world is apt to look only to the executive part of conduct—to the outward actions, which come forth from behind the curtains of deliberative thought; and as these have stated seasons, and are not constantly recurring, it hath come to pass that the Word of God is read and entertained, chiefly for the visible parts of life; being used as a sort of elbow-monitor to guard our conduct from offence; rather than a universal

law to impregnate all the sources of thought and action. My Brethren, doth the hand ever forget its cunning, or the tongue its many forms of speech, or the soul its various states of feeling and passion? Is there an interval, in the wakeful day, when the mind ceases to be in fluctuating motion, and is bound in rest like the frozen lake? I do not ask, is it always vexed like the troubled sea?—but, doth it ever rest from emotion and remain steadfast like the solid land? Doth not thought succeed thought, impression impression, recollection recollection, in a ceaseless and endless round? And before this pleasant agitation of vital consciousness can compose itself to rest, the eye must be sealed to light, and the ear stopped to hearing, and the body become dead to feeling, and the powers of thought and action, done out, must surrender themselves to repose. Nay, even then, under the death-like desertion of all her faculties, and the oppressive weight of sleep, the mind in her remoter chambers keeps up a fantastical disport of mimic life, as if loth for an instant to forego the pleasure she hath in conscious being. Seeing then, not even the sleep-locked avenues of sense, nor the worn-out powers of thought and action, nor slumber's soft embrace, can so lull the soul that she should for a while forget her cogitations, and join herself to dark oblivion; seeing that she keeps up the live-long day a busy play of thought, feeling and action, and during the night keeps vigils in her mysterious chambers, fighting with the powers of oblivion and inertness a battle for existence—how should she be able for any instant to do without

the presence and operations of her Creator's laws—from which being at any instant exempted, she is a god unto herself, or the world is her god? From their authority to be detached, however brief a season, is for that season to be under foreign control, and rebellious to the Being of whom her faculties are holden, and by whom her powers of life are upheld.—His laws should be present in our inward parts, yea, hidden in our hearts, that we offend him not. They should be familiar as the very consciousness of life. Into the belief being received, they should pass into the memory, grow incorporate with the hidden sources of nature; until the array of our purposes and actions learn to display itself under the banners of the Supreme; until instinct, blind instinct, himself have his eye opened and purged by the light of heaven, and come forth submissive to Heaven's voice.

If any one who heareth me have the Word so believed, so treasured, so incorporated, the same is a perfect man, and needeth only to preserve himself so. But as there is no one or hardly any one so instated, I take the benefit of these arguments and illustrations, to press home upon you the reading of the Word in another style than you are wont.

And, *First*, That which I have sketched of the soul's necessities needeth something more than to rake the scriptures for a few opinions, which, by what authority I know not, they have exalted with the proud name of *the doctrine*: as if all scripture were not profitable for doctrine,—Masterful men, or the masterful current of opinion, hath ploughed

with the word of God, and the fruit has been to inveigle the mind into the exclusive admiration of some few truths, which being planted in the belief, and sacrificed to in all religious expositions and discourses have become popular idols, which frown heresy and excommunication upon all who dare stand for the unadulterated, uncurtailed testimony. Such shiboleths every age hath been trained to mouth; and it is as much as one's religious character is worth to think that the doctrinal shiboleths of the present day may not include the whole contents and capacity of the written Word. But, truly, there are higher fears than the fear even of the religious world; and greater loss than the loss of religious fame. Therefore, craving indulgence of you to hear us to an end, and asking the credit of good intention upon what you have already heard, we summon your whole unconstrained man to the engagement of reading the Word; not to authenticate a meagre outline of opinions elsewhere derived, but to prove and purify all the sentiments which bind the confederations of life; to prove and purify all the feelings which instigate the actions of life; many to annihilate; many to implant; all to regulate and reform; to bridle the tongue till its words come forth in unison with the word of God, and to people the whole soul with the population of new thoughts, which that Word reveals of God and man of the present and the future. These doctrines, truly, should be like the mighty rivers which fertilize our island, whose waters, before

escaping to the sea, have found their way to the roots of each several flower, and plant, and stately tree, and covered the face of the land with beauty and with fertility—spreading plenty for the enjoyment of man and beast. So ought these great doctrines of the grace of God in Christ, and the help of God in the Spirit, and fallen man's need of both—to carry health and vitality to the whole soul and surface of Christian life. But it hath appeared to us, that, most unlike such wide-spreading streams of fertility, they are often, as it were, confined within rocky channels of intolerance and disputation, where they hold noisy brawl with every impediment, draining off the natural juices of the soil; and, instead of fruits and graces, leaving all behind naked, barren, and unpeopled!—Which makes us lament,

In the *Second* place, That the catechetical books of any church should have come to play such a conspicuous part in the foreground of the Christian stage, and not have kept their proper inferiority of serving as handmaidens to the book of God. They are exhibitions not of the whole Bible, as is often thought, but of the abstract doctrines, and formal commandments of the Bible; and this not upon any superhuman testimony, but after the judgment of fallible mortals like ourselves. We are not discontented with them on that account, but, on the other hand, we are proud to possess such as our church doth acknowledge: but we are very discontented that they should have stepped from their proper place of discern-

ing heresy, and preserving in the church the unity of faith: that from this useful office they should have come to usurp it as the great instrument of a religious education, and the great storehouse of religious knowledge, in our families, in our schools, and even in the ministry of our churches. Now they are not good instruments of education, being above the level of youth and the most of men, and addressing only the intellect, and that only with logical forms of truth, not with narrative, with example, with eloquence or with feeling. And as to their being storehouses of religious knowledge—They want the most essential staples of our religion; for there is in them no authoritative voice of our God that we should fear them; no tender sympathetic voice of our Saviour, that we should tenderly affect them in return; no unction of the Holy One, that we should depend upon them for healing power. All we do is to believe them, and this not until we have carried an appeal to the word of God,—which surely were as worthy a first appeal and a maiden faith. Moreover there is in them no feature of Christian imagery, to catch the conception; nor patterns of holy men, to awaken the imitation of excellence, and draw on the admiration of holiness; no joyful strains of hope and promised bliss, to rouse Nature's indolence; nor eager remonstrances against the world's ways; nor stern denouncements, like the thunder of heaven upon the head of its transgressions; nor pathetic bursts of sympathy over Nature's melancholy conditions, and

more melancholy prospects. On these accounts most indubitable it is that the rich and mellow Word, with God's own wisdom mellow, and rich with all mortal and immortal attractions is a better net to catch childhood, to catch manhood withal, than these pieces of man's wording, however true to Scripture, or compounded of the ingredients of human wisdom. From the prevalence of this taste for doctrinal and catechetical statements, there hath sprung,

In the *Third* place, The following succession of practical evils, over which we most bitterly lament. The Scriptures are not read for the higher ends of teaching the soul practical wisdom, and overcoming the practical errors of all her faculties, of all her judgments, and of all her ways. The Word, which is diversified for men of all gifts cometh to be prized chiefly as a treasure of intellectual truth, elements of religious dogmatism—often an armoury of religious warfare. Our spirits become intolerant of all who find in the Bible any tenets differing from our own; as if they had made an invasion upon the integrity of our faith, and were plotting the downfal of religion itself. An accurate statement of opinion from the pulpit, from the lips of childhood, from the death-bed of age, becomes all in all; whereas it is nothing if not conjoined with the utterances of a Christian spirit, and the evidences of a renewed life. Who can bear the logical and metaphysical aspect with which Religion looks out from the temples of this land,

playing about the head, but starving the well-springs of the heart, and drying up the fertile streams of a holy and charitable life! An accurate, systematic form is the last perfection of knowledge; and a systematic thinker is the perfection of an educated man. Therefore it is high intolerance of the far greater number, whose heart and whose affections may be their master faculty, to present nothing but intellectual food, or that chiefly: and moreover, it is a religious spoliation of the heavenly wisdom, which hath a strain fitted to every mood; and it is an unfeeling, unfaithful dealing between God and the creatures whom he hath been at such charges to save. And to look suspicious upon those who are attracted to the sacred page by its gracious pictures of the divine goodness, and love it with a simple answer of affection to its affectionate sayings, or a simple answer of hope to its abundant promises—to undervalue those who feed their souls with its spiritual psalmody, or direct their life by its weighty proverbs, reckoning an authority and grace of God to reside in every portion of it—to suspect those who live on devotion, on acknowledgments of Providence, and imitation of Christ, because they cannot couch their simple faith and feeling in technical and theological phrase, but sink dumb when the high points of faith are handled—all these—the baneful effects of holding so much acquaintance with formularies of doctrine, and so little with the Word itself—so much acquaintance with the religious spirit of the age

and country, and so little with the spirit of God, argue a narrow form of religion, and an uncharitableness of spirit, from which we pray God to deliver all who pertain to the household of faith!

Oh! brethren, let me now drop this strain of censure which the honour of the Bible hath forced me to maintain against my better liking, and speak persuasively in your ear for a noble and more enlarged perception of the truth. Pour ye out your whole undivided heart before the oracles of God. Give your enlarged spirit to the communion of his word. Be free; be disentangled. Let it teach; let it reprove; let it correct; let it instruct in righteousness; let it elevate you with its wonderful delineations of the secrets of the divine nature, and of the future destinies of the human race, higher than the loftiest poetry: and let it carry you deeper, with its pictures of our present and future wretchedness, than the most pathetic sentiment ever penned by the novelist:—and let it take affection captive by its pictures of divine mercy and forgiveness, more than the sweetest eloquence: let it transport you with indignation at that with which it is indignant, and take you with passion when it is impassioned; when it blames be ye blamed; when it exhorts be ye exhorted; when it condescends to argument, by its arguments be ye convinced. Be free to take all its moods, and to catch all its inspirations. Then shall you become instinct with all Christian feeling, and pregnant with all holy

fruits, "thoroughly furnished for every good word and work."

Why, in modern times, do we not take from the Word that sublimity of design and gigantic strength of purpose which made all things bend before the saints, whose praise is in the Word and the church of God? Why have the written secrets of the Eternal become less moving than the fictions of fancy, or the periodical works of idle literature; and their impressiveness died away into the imbecility of a tale that hath been often told? Not because man's spirit hath become more weak. Was there ever an age in which it was more patient of research, or restless after improvement? Not because the Spirit of God hath become backward in his help, or the Word divested of its truth—but because we treat it not as the all-accomplished wisdom of God—the righteous setting works of men along side of it, or masters over it—the world altogether apostatizing from it unto folly. We come to meditate it, like armed men to consult of peace—our whole mind occupied with insurrectionary interests—and suffer no captivity of its truth. Faith, which should brood with expanded wings over the whole heavenly legend, imbibing its entire spirit—what hath it become? a name to conjure up theories and hypotheses upon. Duty likewise hath fallen into a few formalities of abstaining from amusements, and keeping up severities—instead of denoting a soul girt with all its powers for its Maker's will.

Religion also, a set of opinions and party distinctions separated from high endowments, and herding with cheap popular accomplishments—a mere serving-maid of every day life; instead of being the mistress of all earthly, and the preceptress of all heavenly, sentiments—and the very queen of all high gifts, graces and perfections, in every walk of life!

To be delivered from this dwarfish exhibition of that plant which our heavenly Father hath planted, take up this holy book. Let your devotions gather warmth from the various exhibitions of the nature and attributes of God. Let the displays of his power overawe you, and the goings forth of his majesty still you into reverend observance. Let his uplifted voice awake the slumber of your spirits, and every faculty burn in adoration of that image of the invisible God which his word reveals. If Nature is reverend before Him, how much more the spirit of man for whom he rideth forth in his state! Let his Holiness, before which the pure seraph veils his face, and his Justice, before which the heavens are rebuked, humble our frail spirits in the dust, and awaken all their conscious guilt. Then let the richness of his mercy strike us dumb with amazement, and his offered grace revive our hopes anew; and let his Son, coming forth with the embraces of his love, fill our spirits with rapture.—Let us hold him fast in sweet communion; exchange with him affection's kindest tokens; and be satisfied with the

sufficiency of his grace; and let the strength of his Spirit be our refuge, his all-sufficient strength our buckler and our trust!

Then, stirred up through all her powers, and awakened from the deep sleep of Nature and oblivion of God, which among visible things she indulgeth, our soul will come forth from the communion of the Word full of divine energy and ardour, prepared to run upon this world's theatre the race of duty for the prize of life eternal. She will erect herself beyond the measures and approbation of men, into the measures and approbation of God, and become like the saints of old, who, strengthened by such repasts of faith, "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

ORATION III.

JOHN V. 39. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THE OBEYING OF THE ORACLES OF GOD.

Hitherto the way of our discourse hath been easy, though among the prejudices of men. In claiming for the Almighty's voice a due preparation and a full attendance of the human faculties, we have been handling a question of religious formality rather than of religious conduct.—Conduct doubtless it is duly to wait upon the Lord, the conduct of the heart as well as of the outward man, but it is a conduct which may be assumed at little expense. It requires a sacrifice of convenience and of attention, which many would be content to render, if it would purchase them the favour of God: and many there be who give themselves with all diligence to the lessons already handled, of making ready and giving ear to the divine Word, but stop short when summoned to the obedience of what they have heard. Then interest comes in to play its part, and custom, and the fear of change, with all the aversions of Nature to the will of God. The divine word, in old times, commended itself to the fears of men, while the emblems of omnipotence overhung them. The rebellion of Korah

soon ceased when the earth opened her mouth; and the people left murmuring when the fiery serpents made havoc of the camp; and though these emblems have ceased, the Scriptures have around them so much of hereditary reverence, and so much of intrinsic recommendation, that the pleadings which we have made seem to us easy, compared with that upon which we have now to enter. We have now to contest it with the most stubborn habits and the most pleasing desires of Nature. It is no longer a matter of words to be listened to, but of deeds to be performed. The law promulgated with such solemnity, and listened to with such devotion, has now to be obeyed. Then, brethren, lend us a favourable ear, and give to our words a generous welcome: the cause is difficult, the issues most momentous; the instrument is weak, and your interests are at stake; therefore may God, who sustaineth the right, not absent himself from the cause of his own holy law, but give efficacy to weakness, that his glory may the more abound.

There prevails universally against divine institutions not only a strong reluctance, but also a delusive prejudice that they are an invasion upon the liberty of man's estate. The question is conceived to be, whether we shall be at our own liberty or at the disposal of God—a question between freedom and compulsion. This prejudice we shall first expose, and bring the fair statement of the question before you. Then we shall account for the reluctance which we feel to the law of God

when we enter to its obedience. Then set before you the fatal result of persisting against it; and close this oration by contesting it with your demurs and oppositions.

The portion of truth which one can for himself examine is so mere a scantling of what is needful for the service of his life, and has in it such instability when not under the helm of authority, human or divine, that men have found it necessary to lay up and patronize a store of common truth, out of which each may be furnished ready to hand when he comes to need it, without the trouble of discovering for himself. This common store consists of the customs established, the opinions popular, the laws instituted, the private duties expected, and the manners approved. These are a grand legacy transmitted from successive generations, the accumulated wealth of the wit and wisdom of our fathers—in which to become conversant we are for nearly a third of our life regarded as under age, wards of our parents, and incompetent in great matters to act for ourselves. If we set any of these traditions aside, following our own inventions or giving scope to our personal freedom, we are eyed with suspicion or punished as defaulters, and, in capital matters, banished from good society, from our native land, and from life itself. Thus it fares with human kind; they are knit generation to generation. Our fathers bind us, and we shall bind our children. No man is free. All men are constrained by an authority over which they have

no control, and are in their turn controlling others who have yet to be.

Let no man, therefore, in the pride of his heart, revolt from the traditions of God as an imposition upon the freedom of his estate. If the wisdom of God take no hand in the ordination of our life, then the wisdom of our fathers will do it all. But for us we shall be the same governed and shackled creatures as before. We may change the place of our residence for a country where God's traditions are unknown, and thereby change the degree or form of the bondage, but the necessity of it for peace and enjoyment will still remain. We may change our sphere in life to one where God's traditions are trampled under foot, and find a momentary release, but soon the habits of our new condition will become as peremptory as those of the old.—In truth, there is no deliverance. Society is beforehand with us; and along with its beautified fields and happy inventions and manifold conditions of comfort, hands down to us as the price of these a thousand laws and restraints upon the freedom of our conduct.

Such being the hereditary bondage of all ages and of all nations, those are the happiest who have had the wisest and most virtuous ancestors, to derive to them only wholesome restraints upon the uncertainty of individual judgment and the waywardness of individual will;—those being the most blessed of all, who have been favoured with laws and institutions from the perfection of wisdom which is with Him who knows the bounds

of man's capacity, and the limits within which his happiness and honour reside. For, the wisest men being little acquainted with the secret workings of their own heart, whose mysterious organization is deep seated beyond our observation, are still less able to comprehend another's nature, so as to prescribe with infallible certainty for its government. The best they can do is to point out some palpable errors to be avoided, some gross delinquencies to be shunned, some common rights to be revered, some noble actions to be honoured, some base ones to be disgraced. They can buoy some few of the shoals and rocks of life, but the tides and currents which pervade it are beyond their management. They can construct ports and havens for us to touch at, but the manning and equipping and propelling the vessel is with God alone. He who gave the soul her powers, and to all his works their properties, can alone sweetly accommodate them with ordinances. The best attempts of lawgivers are but bungling artifices for compassing coarse designs, aiming at the security of some visible and external good, and that attaining not without great waste of private liberty and happiness: whereas God, being perfectly acquainted with our most inward principles, and with all the shortest and safest ways to happiness, can, with no more effort than is necessary, carry us through all the departments and degrees of excellence. He therefore is the only fit lawgiver; his statutes the only liberty; all other obedience, being an acquiescence in that of whose perfect

rectitude we are nothing sure, has in it a servility, —but this is honour, this is exaltation, to fulfil all our powers for the purposes for which they were given, and after the rules of him who gave them.

The question therefore of a religious or an irreligious life, when thus opened up, no longer shows itself to be a question of liberty or of compulsion, but of one kind of authority against another. There are two competitors for our service, God and the world; and the question is Which will we obey? Will we yield to the sovereignty of the various laws and customs which upon coming to man's estate we find established; time-serving what has in it no wit but the wisdom of man, and no stability but the power of man, and which we had no say whatever in constructing, and which accommodates itself but ill to our conditions? or will we yield to the sovereignty of those institutes which have in them no seed of change, softly framed to sway the heart and to insinuate into all its corners the harmony and peace of heaven, which supply the deficiencies of our wisdom and stay the swerving of our life, and conduct us at length to the unchangeable happiness and honour of the life to come?

And yet, though the question when thus accurately stated stands beyond all reasonable doubt, and leaves us without excuse in preferring human authority to divine, such is the antipathy and resistance of human nature to God, that his statutes which rejoice the heart are obstinately withstood, while to the ordinances and customs of men we

willingly yield our necks. There be multitudes with whom the voice of the Lord of hosts hath no sway against the voice of fashion; and the saintly graces of the Spirit of God no chance against the graces of accomplished life. Multitudes, with whom the calls of low sensual instinct prevail against the calls of the Almighty to glory and honour—And multitudes to whom life's commonest drudgery is an enjoyment compared with the obedience of a godly custom or a Christian precept!

This reluctance to the divine, and compliance with the human institutions, might seem to bear against what we have advanced upon the superior wisdom and suitableness of the former, and to prove that God in devising for human improvement had missed of his aim. We think it good therefore to show how this reluctance comes about, and how we find ourselves at man's estate so enamoured of the world's bondage as to feel it like a second nature, which we cannot give up for the service of God without the most violent and painful effort. This inquiry, by revealing the sources of our enmity to the law of God, will show the time at which, and the means by which, it may be most successfully encountered.

At first our enmity was as strong to the world's institutions as it is now to the institutions of God. There is in every nature a preference of its own will, and a reluctance to surrender it to another. It is not till after many struggles that

a mother gains the mastery of her child, and not till after much discipline that a youth gives willingly in to the tasks of his teacher. And to the moral and decent customs of life we know that many youths can never bring themselves to conform at all, but set them at open defiance or hide in secrecy their violation of them. After twenty years of training to what is honourable and good, never omitted for a day, and hardly for a single hour, with the constant presence of examples and the constant terror of censures, such is the urgency of nature and her reluctance to control, that a youth shall no sooner remove from the neighbourhood of his early restraints, than he will cast them at his feet, and take the whole scope of this self-willedness. And thus many run to ruin when they leave the home of their father and the eye of their friends. Let us not be amazed, therefore, that the statutes of the Lord, to which there is no constant or sufficient training of parents and of masters, and which take under their control not only the form and fashion of life, but the whole thoughts and intentions of the heart, should fare the same, and have a fearful struggle with Nature's independence.

Now, by the same means of early discipline and example by which we were brought to acquiesce in the government of our parents, the mastery of our teachers, and the authority of life's many forms and customs, we shall most likely be brought to acquiesce in the statutes of the Lord. Just as no parent who wished his child to be a

well-doing member of society, would for the first years of his life turn him adrift from counsel and correction, but find for him masters to instruct, and patterns to copy after, adding to all the influence of his own parental authority and affection—even so, if you would have your child to flourish in religious life, you must not sequester the subject of religion from your table or your household, nor keep him in the dark till he arrive at years of reflection; but from the first dawn of thought and effort of will, teach him with a winning voice, and with a gentle hand lead him into the ways of God. The raw opinion, that a certain maturity of judgment must be tarried for, before entering into religious conference with our children, comes of that notion which pervades the religious world, that religion rests upon the concoction of certain questions in theology, to which mature years are necessary; whereas it rests upon the authority of God, which a child can comprehend so soon as it can the authority of its father; the love of Christ, which a child can comprehend so soon as it can the love of its mother; the assistance of the Spirit, which it can comprehend so soon as it is alive to the need of instruction or help from its parents; the difference between right and wrong, which it may be taught so soon as it can perform the one and avoid the other. There is a religion of childhood, and a religion of manhood; the former standing mostly in authority, the latter in authority and reason conjoined; the former referring chiefly to words and actions, the latter

embracing also principles and sentiments. But because you cannot instil into children the full maturity of religious truth, is no more argument for neglecting to travel with them on religion, than it would be to refuse teaching them obedience to yourself and respect of others till they could comprehend the principles on which parental obedience and friendly respect are grounded.

Now, we must confess it hath seldom fallen to us to see religion taught in the family with that diligence with which good manners, parental respect, and deference to custom are taught. The right and wrong of things is not distinguished with reference to the divine command, but with reference to the opinion of others and the ways of the world. Excellence is not urged from the approbation of God, and the imitation of Christ, and the rewards of heaven, but out of emulation of rivals, and ambition of the world's places. Companions are not sought according to their piety, their virtue, and their general worth, but according to their rank and their prospects in life. To which neglect of means, parents do often add the practical contradiction of religion, swearing perhaps, perhaps quarrelsome at home, entertaining worldly views of most subjects, religious views of almost none; and for six days in the week, banishing the face and form of religion from the eyes of their household. What glorious opportunities these for the despight of Satan to revel in! The mind impressible as wax, wondering after novelty, and thirsting after knowledge of good and

ill, unbound by habit and roving in its freedom, from within and from without solicited to evil—in this, the spring-time of human character, when ye the husbandmen of your children's minds should be labouring the soil, and spreading it out to the Sun of righteousness, and sowing it with the seed of the everlasting Word; ye are leaving it waste and undefended, for the enemy to enter in and sow it with the tares of wickedness to take root and flourish, and choke any good seed which the ministers of grace may chance afterwards to scatter.

Have ye the conscience to think, brethren, that for this neglect an occasional visit to the church Catechism of a Sabbath night will compensate? or can you believe that certain words lying dormant in the memory during the years of budding manhood will operate like an eastern talisman, or a catholic scapular, against the encounter of evil? Why should the wounded prejudices of any man wince while thus we speak, as if it were not God's truth we spoke. Have we not the experience within oursevles, of having been mastered by this world's ambitious schools, albeit not untutored in the theological love of childhood, and have ye not the same experience? Feel ye not, when ye would set your hearts in order before the Lord, that they are all like an unweeded garden, and that you have to begin by tearing and lacerating the loves, admirations and proprieties which in early life cast their seducements over you, without note of warning from parents, or from the books in which your parents and your masters schooled you? Take

heed, then, and resist the evil in its first beginning. Give the enemy the spring season, and you generally give him the summer, the autumn and the winter of life, with all eternity to boot; but tutor your children in the institutions of God, with a constant watchfulness and a patient perseverance, beginning with restraint, then with soft persuasion leading on, then with arguments of duty and interest confirming; and in the end, habit, which at first is adverse, will turn propitious, and the blessing of God promised to the right training of children, will keep them from leaving his paths when they are old.

The want of a proper selection and application of means in early life, is a chief cause why we all find it such a task to conform our youth and manhood to the laws of God. It is not that these laws are ill adapted to our nature, whereof they are the guides, the sweeteners and the perfecters; but that our nature hath got under adverse government, and been fed up with indulgences, and degraded with services from which we cannot now without great pain and exertion be delivered. It is not that God hath withheld his blessing, which blessing I understand to be like an atmosphere around every man, that he hath at all times free liberty to breathe in through the use of appointed means; but it is, that in our youth we were not properly applied to, and misthrove for want of proper spiritual treatment. Far from us be the unholy office of reflecting upon our pious parents, whose faults, whatever they be, their children should

modestly hide, not rudely discover. Farther be it from us to excuse their unworthy children, who, had they listened to a father's counsel, or been softened by a mother's tears, had not far wandered from wise and prudent paths. But farther from us than both, be the impious thought, that there is any son of man whom the Almighty doth not wish to become a son of light, and for whose growth in grace, from very childhood, he hath not set forth a sufficient supply in the everlasting gospel. We blame not our parents—ourselves we excuse not, while we justify our Father which is in heaven. Parents may be more parental, children may be more obedient, but our Heavenly Father cannot exceed the boundless dimensions of his love to all mankind. Therefore, wherever the blame is of the present wildness and inculture of our spirits, most certainly it rests not with him.

This our reluctance to divine institutions is a calamity to be accounted for and overcome, not a common-place to be idly harangued of; and, instead of inditing popular truisms upon the corruption of human nature, we think it wiser to have pointed out to you the season at which that serpent within us may be most easily strangled. That season to most of us is past and gone; and here we are to contend against the mischief matured by time and confirmed by a thousand habits. To assist this struggle for conformity to the will of God, we brought forward on former occasions every solemn consideration of the honour done us, and the necessity laid on us, by his having ever conde-

scended to become our lawgiver. And now what more can we do, than set before you the consequences of resisting his revealed will, and craving you, by every thing safe, manly and honourable, to conform to his commandments, for the sake of all that is dear to you as immortal creatures.

Obey the Scriptures, or you perish. You may despise the honour done you by the Majesty above, you may spurn the sovereignty of Almighty God, you may revolt from creation's universal rule to bow before its Creator, and stand in momentary rebellion against his ordinances; his overtures of mercy you may cast contempt on, and crucify afresh the Royal Personage who bore them; you may riot in your licentious liberty for a while, and make game of his indulgence and long-suffering. But come at length it will, when Revenge shall array herself to go forth, and Anguish shall attend her, and from the wheels of their chariot ruin and dismay shall shoot far and wide among the enemies of the king, whose desolation shall not tarry, and whose destruction, as the wing of the whirlwind, shall be swift—hopeless as the conclusion of eternity and the reversion of doom. Then around the fiery concave of the wasteful pit the clang of grief shall ring, and the flinty heart which repelled tender mercy shall strike its fangs into its proper bosom; and the soft and gentle spirit which dissolved in voluptuous pleasures, shall dissolve in weeping sorrows and outbursting lamentations. And the gay glory of time shall depart; and sportful

liberty shall be bound for ever in the chain of obdurate necessity. The green earth, with all her blooming beauty and bowers of peace, shall depart. The morning and evening salutations of kinsmen shall depart; and the ever welcome voice of friendship, and the tender whispering of full-hearted affection, shall depart, for the sad discord of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. And the tender names of children, father and mother, and wife and husband, with the communion of domestic love and mutual affection, and the inward touches of natural instinct,—which family compact, when uninvaded by discord, wraps the live-long day into one swell of tender emotion, making earth's lowly scenes worthy of heaven itself—All, all shall pass away; and instead shall come the level lake that burneth, and the solitary dungeon, and the desolate bosom, and the throes and tossings of horror and hopelessness, and the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.

'Tis written, 'tis written, 'tis sealed of heaven, and a few years shall reveal it all. Be assured it is even so to happen to the despisers of holy writ. With this in arrear, what boots liberty, pleasure, enjoyment—all within the hourglass of time, or the round earth's continent, all the sensibilities of life, all the powers of man, all the attractions of woman!

Terror hath sitten enthroned on the brows of tyrants, and made the heart of a nation quake; but upon this peaceful volume there sits a terror

to make the mute world stand aghast. Yet not the terror of tyranny neither, but the terror of justice; which abides the scorners of the most High God, and the revilers of his most gracious Son. And is it not just, though terrible, that he who brooked not in heaven one moment's disaffection, but lanched the rebel host to hell, and bound them evermore in chains of darkness, should also do his sovereign will upon the disaffected of this earth, whom he hath long endured and pleaded with in vain. We are fallen, 'tis true—we found the world fallen into ungodly customs, 'tis true—here are we full grown and mature in disaffection, most true. And what can we do to repair a ruined world, and regain a lost purity? Nothing—nothing can we do to such a task. But God hath provided for this pass of perplexity; he hath opened a door of reconciliation, and laid forth a store of help, and asks at our hand no impossibilities, only what our condition is equal to in concert with his freely offered grace.

These topics of terror, it is very much the fashion of the time to turn the ear from, as if it were unmanly to fear pain. Call it manly or unmanly, it is Nature's strongest instinct—the strongest instinct of all animated nature: and to avoid it is the chief impulse of all our actions. Punishment is that which law founds upon, and parental authority in the first instance, and every human institution from which it is painful to be dismembered. Not only is pain not to be in-

flicted without high cause, or endured without trouble, but not to be looked on without a pang: as ye may judge, when ye see the cold knife of the surgeon enter the patient's flesh, or the heavy wain grind onward to the neck of a fallen child. Despise pain, I wot not what it means. Bodily pain you may despise in a good cause, but let there be no motive, let it be God's simple visitation, spasms of the body for example, then how many give it licence, how many send for the physician to stay it? Truly, there is not a man in being whom bodily pain, however slight, if incessant, will not turn to fury or to insensibility—embittering peace, eating out kindliness, contracting sympathy, and altogether deforming the inner man. Fits of acute suffering which are soon to be over, any disease with death in the distance may be borne; but take away hope, and let there be no visible escape, and he is more than mortal that can endure. A drop of water incessantly falling upon the head, is found to be the most excrutiating of all torture, which proveth experimentally the truth of what is said.

Hell, therefore, is not to be despised, like a sick bed, if any of you be so hardy as to despise a sick bed. There are no comforting kindred, no physician's aid, no hope of recovery, no melancholy relief of death, no sustenance of grace. It is no work of earthly torture or execution, with a good cause to suffer in, and a beholding world or posterity to look on, a good conscience to approve, with scornful words to revenge cruel actions,

and the constant play of resolution or study of revenge. It is no struggle of mind against its material envelopements and worldly ills, like stoicism, which was the sentiment of virtue nobly downbearing the sense of pain. I cannot render it to fancy, but I can render it to fear. Why may it not be the agony of all diseases the body is susceptible of, with the anguish of all deranged conceptions and disordered feelings, stinging recollections, present remorses, bursting indignations, with nothing but ourselves to burst on, dismal prospects, fearful certainties, fury, folly and despair.

I know it is not only the fashion of the world, but of Christians, to despise the preaching of future woe; but the methods of modern schools which are content with one idea for their gospel, and one motive for their activity, we willingly renounce for the broad methods of the Scripture, which bring out ever and anon the recesses of the future to upbear duty and downbear wickedness, and assail men by their hopes and fears as often as by their affections, by the authority of God as often as by the constraining love of Christ, by arguments of reason and of interest no less. Therefore sustained by the frequent example of our Saviour, the most tender-hearted of all beings, and who to man hath shown the most excessive love; we return, and give men to wit, that the despisers of God's law and of Christ's gospel, shall by no means escape the most rigorous fate. Pain, pain inexorable, tribulation and anguish shall be their everlasting doom! The smoke of their torments

ascendeth for ever and ever. One frail thread snapped, and they are down to the bottomless pit. Think of him who had a sword suspended by a hair over his naked neck while he lay and feasted, —think of yourselves suspended over the pit of perdition by the flimsy thread of life—a thread near worn, weak in a thousand places, ever threatened by the fatal shears which soon shall clip it. You believe the Scriptures, then this you believe, which is true as that Christ died to save you from the same.

If you call for a truce to such terrific pictures, then call for mercy against the more terrific realities; but if you be too callous or too careless to call for mercy and ensue repentance, your pastors may give you truce to the pictures, but God will give no abeyance to the realities into which they are dropping evermore, and you shall likewise presently drop, if you repent not.

Now, if you be aroused to think, let us argue together and bring things to an issue. What hinders you from giving your souls to the divine institutions? Early habits hinder, the world's customary fashions hinder, and Nature's leanings the other way hinder, and passion hinders, and a whole insurrectionary host of feelings muster against the change. Well, be it granted that a troop of joys must be put to flight, and a whole host of pleasant feelings be subdued. Then, what is lost? Is honour lost? Is fortune lost? Is God's providence scared away? Hath the world slipt from beneath your feet, and does the air of heaven

no longer sustain you? Has life deceased, or are your faculties of happiness forgone? Change, the dread of change, that is all. The change of society and habits, with the loss of some few perishable gaieties.

Now let us reason together. Is not that as great a change when your physician chambers you up, and restricts your company to nurses, and your diet to simples? Is not that as great a change when you leave the dissipated city, outworn with its excitements, and live with solitude and inconvenience in your summer quarters? and is not that a greater change which stern law makes, when it mures up our person and gives us outcasts to company with? And where is the festive life of those who sail the wide ocean; and where the gaieties of the campaigning soldier; and how does the wandering beggar brook his scanty life? If for the sake of a pained limb you will undergo the change, will you not for the removal of eternal pains of spirit and flesh? If for a summer of refreshment amongst the green of earth, and the freshness of ocean, ye will undergo the change, will ye not for the rich contents of heaven? And if at the command of law ye will, and if for gain the sailor will, and for honour the soldier will, and for necessity the strolling beggar will; men and brethren, will ye not, to avoid hell, to reach heaven, to please the voice of God, to gain the inheritance of wealth and honour, and to feed your spirit's starved necessities—Oh men, will ye not muster resolution to enterprise the change?

Bring manly fortitude to this question, I entreat you, and look it in the face; compare these two alternatives—the world's principles and customs—Christ's principles and customs. When we entered into life we were equally strangers to both, predisposed to have our own will in every thing, and reluctant to resign it either to the institutions of our ancestors, or to the institutions of Christ. By a greater aptitude of nature, and the neighbourhood of more examples, and the presence of more immediate rewards and punishments, and a youth of continual training, we have grown into the school of the world where we are enchanted and spell-bound, I know not with what; but sure we are bewitched, or with thraldom worn down and unmanned. 'Tis not better fortune that holds us; that I deny: nor more accomplishments of mind, nor larger bounds of feeling, nor sublimer thoughts, nor more generous actions, nor more peaceful moments; which I affirm to be all on the other side. What then is the mighty gain? Next to nothing. A few gay smiles of companionship, a few momentary gratifications dear bought at the price of after-thoughts and after-depressions; a few heady excesses of spirit, and extravagances of language, and irregularities of conduct; that is nearly the sum total of the benefit. Are you free? Not a jot. You are the slaves of the customs, and dare not on your peril depart from one of them. You call religion a bondage; yes, it is the bondage of angels strong and seraphs blessed; Nature's well-pleased bondage to her Maker, the

creature's reverence for his Creator; but yours, yours is a bondage to idle floating customs, narrow rules of men like yourselves, whose statutes enslave you. You have no privileges worth naming. You have heaven forfeited. You have hell forestalled: Pitiful drudgery. And this is what you are in love with and cannot leave. So were the swinish herd enamoured of Circè's cup, forgetful of their former noble selves.

I wish I could disenchant you, that you might perceive the blessed truth, and love it—which I see not, but I may, seeing God grants his blessing to the weakest instrument. Let me speak a moment of the nature of this change; and if ever, now God send us persuasive words.

Ye take up the thing amiss when you think, as is too often represented, that it is a change to be succeeded in upon the spur of resolution. A beginning it must have, and that most noticeable when from leaving God's face and favour, we turn timorously to seek them again. But for its completion the age of Methuselah were insufficient: men are never converted, but always converting; saints never built up, but always building up. Now herein you do greatly err. Unless you change and master nature at once, you give it up for hopeless, and fall down into the quietus of man's total inability and forlornness. This is the grossness of stupidest error. Knowledge of God's will is not derived at once, cases of conscience are not settled at once, nor is the ability to overcome conferred at once. The conversion is the new birth, but to be born is not to be the man

complete in feature and in mind, which groweth out of knowledge, experience, discipline of youth, observation of life, and the thousand appointed steps between the almost unconscious babe and the accomplished man. Even so, according to our humble view of the matter, the new birth is but the first germ of religion in the soul, which hath to be cherished, nursed, guarded, trained, and taught by methods and means of grace as manifold as natural strength is reared by. Therefore, so that your souls are longing after God, your ears drinking in his counsel, your feet moving, though faint, still moving in the path, be of good cheer, go on and prosper. Nay, so that you are losing conceit of sin by reason of better conceptions, and waxing in fear of future issues, and meditating your mortality more, it is symptomatic of good, go on and prosper. Despair not because you are not perfect, neither turn back because you frequently fall.

And ye advanced Christians, do not despise this day of small things in a younger brother, neither go to impose upon him all your burdens, nor to minister the strongest meat which you can digest; but give God-speed to any endeavour after good, however small. His very aspirations despise not, his imperfections do not sorely rebuke. Strengthen the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees confirm. Strengthen by encouragement and support, do not by rebuke and censure drive him to distraction.

Nevertheless, though this change may appear

in various quarters of the horizon of a sinner's thoughts and interests, there are marks in its progression which may be laid down. Discontent with oneself, a fear of God's displeasure, a desire after the knowledge of his will, an acquiescence in his estimate of our sinfulness, a joyful reception of the Saviour, a growing peace, and with it a strict obedience, a sense of great weakness, a seeking for help by prayer, perusal of the Word, and waiting for the Spirit, and a progress in the way everlasting:—these things, not by order, as if there were an infallible order, which some in their witless unobservance of Christian life do imagine, but certainly, most certainly these marks will reveal themselves in the course of the progression; and such to whom these truths are not disclosing or disclosed, are not christianizing or christianized.

Allow me, then, to gather up the whole that hath been said, and dismiss the subject. This world into which we are born age after age, is marshalled into two parts—those who give heed to the Lord's revelations and thereunto conform their lives—those who give not heed to them, but set up a system of life according to hereditary law, honour and custom. To the one or the other we must submit, there is not one in a thousand who dissents from both, and setteth up for himself. Whichever you destine your children to, to that breed them like a business. Those that have not been so trained, but find themselves confederate with the world, have only to enter themselves to

the school of Christ, nothing doubting of success, if they consult and obey the word of God. They will feel it new, and therefore seemingly more restrictive, but in truth not more restrictive than the old, but otherwise more liberal, more generous, more ennobling, more peaceful and more joyful.

Come over, cast in your lot with the saints, you have every thing to gain—peace of conscience, a divine joy, a fellowship with God, a special providence, a heritage of promise and blessing, a triumphant death, and a crown of everlasting life. The choice of men are here—the prime specimens of manhood, the royal priesthood and chosen generation of mankind—and worth domestic, with Piety, her guardian genius, is here; and worth public, with Charity, her guardian genius, is here; and enterprise heroic, with Faith, her guardian genius, is here; and the chief fathers of science and knowledge have likewise clave with the saints; and the greatest inventors, the inventors of reformation in all worthy matters, are here; apostles and prophets and patriarchs are here; and finally, the first-born of every creature, who is God over all blessed for ever! Amen.

ORATION IV.

JOHN V. 39. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THE OBEYING OF THE ORACLES OF GOD.

We have discoursed upon the preparation necessary for holding intercourse with the word of God, summoning your souls to it as to a most honourable interview, a feast of heavenly wisdom. We have detailed the place which you occupy, and the part which you should perform, when listening to the voice of your Creator, and receiving the law at his mouth—giving ear as the light did when first summoned from its primeval residence, or the sun, and the moon, and the stars; and as mute Nature listens still. We have searched into that strong reluctance which we bear to the divine law, and sought to overcome it by the fearful picture of the desolation which overtakes transgressors;—arguing sore between the world and the word of God, and praying you to be reconciled for the sake of Christ. Heaven grant that we may not have spoken in vain: and now that we are to address ourselves to a loftier argument, may his Spirit fill us with knowledge and affection, that his mysterious and momentous truths may suffer

no disparagement from our weak conception and feeble utterance. The argument for which we now pray to be enabled, is the good fruit which will accrue to all who search and entertain and obey the Scriptures after the manner we have set forth. This we shall display under three heads: the knowledge obtained; the life of heavenly enterprise begotten; and the eternal reward laid up in store.

The eternal power and Godhead of our Creator, says St. Paul, speak through the things which are made. But this oracle of the works of God, which doubtless is loud in commendation of his power and providence, is not easy to be explored by the many who are little enlightened by knowledge, and much taken up with the necessary avocations of life. And those who are conversant with it, do generally in the act of consulting stop short in admiration of the temple which he inhabits, paying their reverence to its richness and decorations, but seldom reaching the inward sanctuary where his voice is heard. Nature hath changed her song, or man hath lost his faculty of interpreting it; for into his ear she uttereth many a strain in commendation of herself, hardly one in commendation of her God. Now natural knowledge, when thus divorced from the knowledge of Nature's God, satisfieth not the ethereal spirit, which must join league with spirit in order to taste its native delight. For what communion is there between the soul of man and the superficial beauty of the earth, which they call Taste, or the know-

ledge of matter's changes, which they call Science?—a most unnatural match yielding no profitable fruit. When the soul once finds a kindred soul, then beginneth her revelry of delight. Unfeigned friendship, chaste love, domestic affection, pure devotion—who compares the intensity and delight of these conjunctions with the stale and heartless sympathy there is between a naturalist and his museum, or a scholar and his books? The human soul groans in languor till she finds a fellow spirit, or a generous cause of human welfare to engage her affections.

Even such languor, such dissatisfaction finds the soul when, without a guide, she goes to seek God in his natural universe, groping about and unrested, hungering for larger insight, perplexed with difficulties, and finding no end, in wandering mazes lost. How refreshing to such a spirit, when the dark cloud God has retired within bursts, and in visible glory he displays himself to his benighted children, speaking to them in an intelligible voice, and revealing the mysteries of his nature! Then cometh rest, and with rest refreshment and enlargement of the soul. There is no cause beyond this First Cause to search after. Than God, the mind can ascend no higher, and is satisfied with his likeness. Where there is perfection without a blemish, which we range the world for in vain,—justice never perverted, which it have been the glory of man to live under,—mercy, with all the tender affections which pacify and harmonize the life of man,—holiness, holding a spotless reign over the happy fields of heaven—all composed

and peaceful within that same Being, who is clothed with the elemental powers, armed with the thunder-bolt, and served by the army of heaven and the voice of fate.

Do ye love to meditate nobleness of nature?—Here it is infinitely noble. Do ye love to contemplate stupendous power put forth in soft acts of goodness?—Behold it here, pouring the full river of pleasure through the universe. Here is the Father of all families, from the highest in the heaven above to the lowest tribe upon the earth beneath, serving out justice and liberality to them all. What would you more to fill your mind with than the idea of God, which, while it fills, elevates, enlarges and refines. With what ardour men behold their favourites of the present or past ages, aiming generously to equal or excel them. What silent musings over their history, and estimation of their parts! Why not rise higher to contemplate the revealed image of the invisible God? He is not seen; neither are the worthies of a former age. They are written of.—He is written of. The one is as lawful an object of thought and imitation as the other.

Nay, the closer to bring you into fellowship, he hath despatched from his highest sphere the image of himself to act the divine part among earthly scenes, and seeing we had fallen from his neighbourhood, and could not regain our lost estate, hath he sent forth his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, down to our sphere, to bind the link between heaven and earth, which seemed for ever to have been broken. He

clothes himself in the raiment of flesh; he puts on like passions and affections, and presents himself to be beheld, talked with, and handled of the sons of men. He opens up the heart of God, and shows it wondrous tender to his fallen creatures. He opens up his own heart, and shows it devoted to death for their restoration. He stretches out his hand, and disease and death flee away. He opens his lips, and lovingkindness drops upon the most sinful of men. He opens a school of discipline for heaven, and none is hindered. Whosoever comes he cherishes with food, fetched from the storehouse of his creating word. The elements he stilleth over their heads and maketh a calm. He brings hope from beyond the dark grave, where she lay shrouded in mortality. Peace he conjures from the troubles of the most guilty breast. The mourner he anoints with the oil of joy. The mourner in sackcloth and ashes he clothes with the garment of praise. He comforts all that mourn. And what more can we say?—but that, if the knowledge of death averted from your heads be joy, and the knowledge of offences forgiven be contentment, and the knowledge of God reconciled be peace, and of heaven offered be glory, and of wisdom streaming from its everlasting fountain be light to the understanding, and strength ministered from the almighty arm of strength be life to the soul,—then, verily, this peace, contentment, honour, and life is yours, Christian believers, through the revelation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God.

Thus to be brought into the secret counsels of the Almighty, by familiar teaching of one himself almighty, is an exaltion of human nature only surpassed by the perfect satisfaction which it yields to her various conditions. To know things as they are to be, and have no perplexities about the future—this is the resolution of a thousand doubts which were wont to afflict the speculation of man. To have that future filled with life and immortality, honour and glory—this is the conquest of all earthly trials and troubles. To know what is best to be done in every predicament from the mouth of God—this is safety. To know, when we have done amiss, where to find forgiveness—this is relief. To know in life's embarrassments where to look for sufficient help—this is assurance. In life's disappointments to know a haven to flee to, and in life's griefs a comforter to repose on;—to have, in short, the faculties of our minds directed, and the ambiguities of our conduct cleared up, and our prayers listened to, and our wants supplied—this is unspeakable privilege, and the knowledge which unlocks is not only the eternal but the present life of man.

Oh! brethren, why stop we short, contenting ourselves with the troublesome parts of knowledge, but from this, in which lieth its true delectation, turning ourselves away? How many of us are content to know only the arts of our livelihood, as if the hands were all the faculties of man, and his body all his consignment from God! Ah! What comes of love, and devotion, and ambition,

and the other faculties of the inner man? and what with the hands can the soul lay up for eternity? Faith must supply her with a busy hand, and the Scriptures with a field to labour on, which, being employed, she will speedily treasure up a sufficiency for eternity.

Not less have the prime ministers and chosen favourites of knowledge departed from the fountain of intelligence. Becoming acquainted with some chamber of Nature's secrets, they think to find satisfaction there: and a satisfaction they do find—the vulgar satisfaction of being honoured, flattered, and perhaps enriched. Equal satisfaction have the most ignorant who may happen to be born affluent or noble; but wisdom's higher satisfaction, consisting in a soul enlightened, and disabused of prejudice and error, and contented with its sphere, it hath not been our lot to find amongst the wise of this world's generation. Their knowledge alters not their hearts, but opening new fields for gratifying temper, gives strength to the evil as often as to the good of their nature, making them more powerful either to good or ill; and hence, according to St. Paul, it puffeth up. But if, instead of resting in the blind adoration of Nature, which, being uninspired with soul, cannot benefit their soul with its communions, they would rise to Nature's God, and acknowledge him not only as powerful to create and move the universe, but as merciful to save, and condescending to visit his meanest creature, then would their travailing with knowledge bless them, and add no

sorrow, but advance them into the fellowship of God's nature and blessedness.

Such are the benefits which accrue to us from the knowledge of the word of God, that nothing derived from any other kind of knowledge can compensate for its absence. Political knowledge carried to excess makes men proud, bitter, and contentious. Poetical knowledge carried to excess disposeth men to be contemptuous of the wise and prosaic ordinances of customary life. Practical knowledge of affairs makes men worldly and artful. Knowledge of the Scriptures is the only wisdom which shall elevate a man's conceptions, while it purifies his principles and sweetens his temper, and makes his conduct bountiful and kind to all around. No matter what be your condition, you shall find direction to dignify and adorn it, and make it large enough for the sanctification of your spirit for heaven.

This reminds me of the second benefit to be derived from perusing the Scriptures: viz. The life of heavenly enterprise to which they move us. If a man would arise above the level of a mere slave, obedient to the habits and customs of the age and place he lives in, to have some say for himself in the regulation of his conduct—then, when he delivers himself from the slavery of custom and example, if he take not to the word of God for his guide, he shall feel himself distracted among the contending principles and desires of his nature—interest drawing him one way, affection another, and passion hurrying him a third.

He shall find how weak are his better perceptions —how weak reason is, how unwilling is will, how conscience expires among the uncertainties, and resolution among the difficulties of an upright course. Such will be, at least, the general experience of men who while they refuse human, lean not to divine authority, but conduct life by principles of their own choosing. Some there are blessed with such weak passions and strong reason as to steer without foreign help; but though such may be found to succeed, instead of being admired for their noble independence by the crowd who cling to ancient and present customs, they will generally be stigmatized as self-conceited, or persecuted as innovators; so that disturbance from without, if not from within, will invade every one who, shaking loose of religious or customary restraints, adventures for himself.

Yet such adventurers should all men become. What to us are the established rules of life, that they should blindly overrule us? Must we be bound in thraldom, to fill, and do no more than fill the narrow bounds of the condition we are born into? Is there nought noble, nought heroical, to be undertaken and achieved? Must the budding desires of our youthful nature be held in check by the narrow prescriptions of an age and an authority we despise; and the labour of a life end in nothing but contemptible drudgery, to keep our tabernacle in being?—Adventurers above your sphere I would have you all to become; brave designs, not antiquated customs, should move your life. A path

heroical you should trace out, and follow to glory and immortality.

But if you resign the rudder of the world's opinions, and cease to be tame, then unruly shall you become, and more unhappy to yourselves, to the world more vexatious, if you adopt not the better rudder of God's own guidance. Human reason in its fallen state may do much to assist, but it is incompetent to guide and overmaster you. Better be slaves, like the world's generations to the soil, and work out the pitiful emolument of temporal and physical comfort they derive, than set their maxims at defiance, and run a wayward course of your own—ordinarily a course of ruin. Yet, in God's name! set these worldly maxims at defiance, their paltry emoluments despise; array yourselves under the safe conduct of the word of God; it will lead you, it will guide you, it will raise you high above earthly objects, through a noble course of well-doing, to the holy place of the Most High.

There is a spell of custom, the Scriptures call it a dead sleep, in which men are bound. They will not think, they will not feel for themselves; and, which is worse, they will not allow God to think and feel before them. And what comes of this spell-bound slavery? the strong and immortal parts of your nature wax weak, the love of good degenerates, and the power of good altogether dies. To renovate your nature, to fill you with a divine nature, to make you, whatever your condition, the companions of God, and the members of

Jesus Christ—objects of angel visits—the honoured ministers of God upon this earth—kings and priests to God—this no less is the design of the Holy Scriptures, and their fruit to those who obey them. Know them, and upon the knowledge act; and all meanness shall forsake your conduct, with all hypocrisies; and all the struggles of passion with interest, and of interest with duty; and your character shall come forth in the strength and beauty of holiness, to the honour and glory of your Creator.

Then you walk with God, and his favour shall compass you around—you are in the way of his commandments, and the great peace which is in the keeping of them shall be your portion—you are living by faith on Christ, and the Spirit of Christ shall be in you—you are walking in the Spirit, and no condemnation remaineth for you. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, will put your enemies to flight. The indwelling of the Spirit will move your soul to divine attainments, and the world's hinderances not hinder you from running the race for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

I know nothing able to restrain or limit the perfection of the meanest man who will submit himself to the word of God. Hard labour may wear you down, but as your day is, so shall your strength be. Your own evil nature may hold back, but the Spirit is powerful over all carnal affections. Temptations may delude you; God will not suffer you to be tempted above what

you can bear. Whatever man has been enabled to reach by divine grace, I see not but man, every man, by the same grace may still attain; therefore adventure, under God's management, to any reach of holy and heavenly life. Put no limitation within the bounds of God's revelations. It depends not on station, it depends not on natural knowledge, it depends not on fortunate accidents, all it depends on is the craving desire to know, and the assiduous endeavour to attain. God is not loath to do his part, nor the word of God difficult to comprehend. Nought is wanting but the desire to be instructed and furnished to every good word and work.

But if you rather prefer the fortune of the brutes that perish, to look upon the light of the sun, and eat the provision of the day, to vegetate like a plant through the stages of life, and, like a plant, to drop where ye grew, and perish from the memory of earth—having done nothing, desired nothing, and expected nothing beyond:—If this you prefer to the other, then have you heard what you lose in the present; hear now what you lose through eternity:—

You lose God's presence, in which all creation rejoiceth. You lose God's capacity to bless you with his manifold blessings, which the cherubim and seraphim can speak of better than a fallen man. You lose the peace and perfect blessedness of heaven, which from this earth we can hardly catch the vision of. Have you suffered spiritual oppression and drowning from fleshly appetites? freedom

from this you lose. Have you groaned under the general bondage of the creature, and called for deliverance? this deliverance you lose. Have you conceived pictures of quiet and peaceful enjoyment amidst beautiful and refreshing scenes? the realities of these ye lose. Have you felt the ravishment of divine communion, when the conscious soul breathes its raptures but cannot utter them? the eternal enjoyment of these you lose. What Adam and Eve enjoyed within the unblemished paradise of Eden with the presence of God—you lose. What Peter and John felt upon the mount of transfiguration, where they would have built tabernacles and remained for ever—you lose. Can you think of this world's fare with contentment? If you are wicked, how do your sins find you out, or overhang you with detection. If you are holy, how your desires outrun your performance, and your knowledge your power; how you fall, are faint, are backsliding, are in darkness, are in doubt, are in dismay! You are not content with this world's fare, you long after something higher and better; hence the perpetual cheering of hope, and instigation of ambition, and thirst after novelty, and restlessness to better your condition. When man cometh to wish, to expect to labour or care for nothing higher or better than his present condition, he is supremely miserable. God hath left these witnesses within our breasts out of whose mouth to convict us. He will say, "Ye strove after something happier, 'Twas the labour of your life to reach it. I let

down heaven's glory to your eager eyes. You put it away; therefore be it put away from your habitation for ever. Oh, ye who labour by toil and trouble to exalt your condition, will ye not exalt it far above the level of thrones or principalities, or any name that is named upon the earth!"

Would that like St. John in the Apocalypse I had seen, or like Paul in the trance I had felt, the glories of heaven, that for your sakes I might unfold them! I have spoken of the removal of earthly disasters and embarrassments, which cleave to the lot of the religious in our kind, and to the lot of the wicked in another kind. But the removal of these is nothing. I have spoken of the gratification of all Nature's hungerings and thirstings after truth, knowledge, goodness, and happiness. But this is nothing, these distresses, these desires, pertain to a weak and fallen creature. It behoves to speak of the enjoyments and desires of angels—of their fervours, their loves, their communions. But who can speak of them?

Yet if emblems can assist you, then do you join in your imagination the emblems and pictures of heaven. What is the condition of its people? That of crowned kings. What is their enjoyment? That of conquerors triumphant, with palms of victory in their hands. What their haunts? The green pastures by the living waters. What their employment? Losing their spirits in the ecstasies of melody, making music upon their harps to the Lord God Almighty, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. For guidance—the Lamb, that is in the midst

of them, shall lead them by rivers of living waters, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. For knowledge—they shall be like unto God, for they shall know even as they are known. For vision and understanding—they shall see face to face, needing no intervention of language or of sign. For ordinances (through which the soul makes imperfect way to her Maker)—there is no temple in the city of their habitation, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever; nay, the very sense hath its gratifications in the city of God; the building of the wall is of jasper, the city of pure gold like unto clear glass; the foundation of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones; every one of the twelve gates a pearl. Now what means this wealth of imagery drawn from every storehouse of nature, if it be not that the choicest of all which the eye beholds or the head is ravished with—that all which makes matter beautiful and the spirit happy—that all which wealth values itself on and beauty delights in, with all the scenery which charms the taste and all the employments which can engage the affections, every thing, in short, shall lend its influence to consummate the felicity of the saints in light.

Oh, what untried forms of happy being, what cycles of revolving bliss, await the just! Conception cannot reach it, nor experience present

materials for the picture of its similitude; and though thus figured out by the choicest emblems, they do no more represent it, than the name of Shepherd does the guardianship of Christ, or the name of Father the love of Almighty God.

Then, Brethren, let me persuade you to make much of the volume which contains the password to the city of God, and without which it is hid both from your knowledge and your search.—And if in this volume there be one truth more prize-worthy than another, it is this, that Christ hath set open to you the gates of the city, and that he alone is the way by which it is to be reached. He hath gone before to prepare its mansions for your reception, and he will come again to those who look for his appearing. For his sake be ye reconciled to God, that ye may have a right to the tree of life, and enter by the gate into the city.

Thus by the combined considerations which have been set before you in succession—by the awfulness of God's presence in his word—by the necessity of listening to it—by the terrific issues of disobeying it—and now by these, the present and eternal gains of obedience—have we pleaded at length for the oracles of God, being convinced that until they be taken up and perused and obeyed under the solemn impression of such feelings, they will never have their proper place in the minds of men, but continue as they are to most, a book purchased, but little read; esteemed, but little acted on. It

is shameful to men of talents and power that they should allow themselves in such indecision upon the subject of religion, which by its effects upon the world is more entitled to preference, in their consideration, than science or literature, or policy or arms. It proves the grossness rather than the refinement, the bondage rather than the liberty of their minds, that they should be so engrossed with fame, and wealth, and power, and the other rewards which wait on eminence in any profession, as to have no thoughts to spare upon revelation and futurity, but go to their graves as ignorant and undecided, and uninfluenced in these matters, as if they were living in the ages before the birth of Christ. I have more respect infinitely for one who having dealt with the subject of the Scriptures finds a verdict against them, than I have for those who have not soul enough to see in the subject aught worthy of their thoughts, although they take up with the merest novelties in fashion and politics, and arts and science, pluming themselves upon the high walk of human interest which they are choosing. Would they know, would they think, would they come to a conclusion, would they justify their neglect of God's great commandments, by a manifesto of reason or feeling or interest, shewing that it is silly, ignoble or useless, to give heed to the Almighty; then they would acquit themselves like men; but it doth bespeak in them a frivolity of mind and a lightness of heart, of which the age and country may well feel ashamed, that they see

no good in that heartfelt vital godliness which hath written its blessed fruits in every characteristic page of our history, and in almost every article in the charter of English rights! No wonder that venality and factious self-interest should come to play in public affairs such leading parts, and that the names of principle and virtue should be smiled on with sceptical scorn by public men, when thus are cast away the fear of God, and the expectation of heaven—that fulcrum upon which magnanimity and disinterestedness in former times did rest when they poised up rooted corruption and arbitrary power from their ancient seats.

Would mathematical science thrive, if Euclid and the Principia were to cease from the studies of our youth? Would the public watchfulness of the people over their rulers thrive, if they were to refrain from perusing the daily intelligence, and conversing of public affairs? Will religion thrive, if the word of God be not studied and its topics conferred on? If at that season when our youth of first family and ambition are preparing their minds for guiding affairs, by courses of early discipline in public schools, and those of second rank are entered to the various professions of life, if then no pains be taken to draw their attention to the sacred writings and impress principles of piety and virtue upon their minds, how can it be expected that religion should even have a chance? One cannot always be learning: youth is for learning, manhood for acting, and old age for rem-

joying the fruits of both. I ask, why, when the future lawyer is studying Blackstone or Lyttleton; the future physician, Hippocrates and Sydenham; the future economist, Smith and Malthus; the future statesman, Locke and Sydney; each that he may prepare for filling a reputable station in the present world—why the future immortal is not at the same time studying the two testaments of God, in order to prepare for the world to come, in which every one of us hath a more valuable stake? If immortality be nothing but the conjuration of priests to cheat the world; then let it pass, and our books go to the wind like the Sibyls' leaves; but if immortality be neither the dream of fond enthusiasts, nor the trick of artful priests, but the revelation of the righteous God; then let us have the literature and the science, and the practice for the long after-stage of our being, as well as for the present time which is but its porch. These pleadings are to men who believe immortality, (we may hereafter plead with those otherwise minded;) therefore justify your belief, and show your gratitude by taking thought and pains about the great concerns of that immortality which you believe.

If a man is fed on unwholesome foods, his health and strength decay, and if he be greedy after such, it proves his whole constitution to be diseased; therefore it troubleth our mind to see what shoals of literary works circulate through the minds of this people day by day, week by week, month by month, quarter by quarter,

eagerly longed for and as greedily devoured, in which there is not one christian sentiment for a thousand that are unchristian. Such virulence of party feeling and violence of personal abuse, and cruel anatomy of men's faults and failings, such inventions of wit and humour, to disguise truth and season falsehood, issue forth from the press amongst the people; that if the contrary influences of religion do not counteract the poison and nourish the noble and generous parts of nature, the public character of this nation for truth and sincerity must fall away, and the people come under the leading of those who write for fame or spite, or hire themselves for pay. This is not meant to bring a railing accusation against the circulating literature, but to hold up to all interested in religion how they are called upon to labour in behalf of the oracles of God now more than ever, when the oracles of vanity and calumny and party rage are so borne abroad upon a thousand wings. The culture which these circulating works give to the faculty of thought, is all in our favour, for our religion stands by thought, and hath been always the mother of thought; but the culture given to bad passions and unholy feelings, is all against us, creating habits and likings which our religion must reverse in its progress over the mind. This, zeal alone will not affect; the character of the age calls for argument and deep feeling and eloquence. You may keep a few devotees together by the hereditary reverence of ecclesiastical canons,

and influence of ecclesiastical persons; but the thinking and influential minds must be overcome by showing, that not only can we meet the adversary in the field by force of argument, but that the spirit of our system is ennobling and consoling to human nature—necessary to the right enjoyment of life, and conducive to every good and honourable work. Religion is not now to be propagated by rebuking the free scope of thought, and drafting as it were every weak creature that will abase his powers of mind before the zeal and unction of a preacher, and by schooling the host of weaklings to keep close and apart from the rest of the world. This both begins wrong and ends wrong. It begins wrong, by converting only a part of the mind to the Lord, and holding the rest in superstitious bonds. It ends wrong, in not sending your man forth to combat in his courses with the unconverted. The reason of both errors is one and the same. Not having thoroughly furnished him to render a reason of the hope that is in him, you dare not trust him in the enemy's camp, lest they should bring him over again, or laugh at him, for cleaving to a side which he cannot thoroughly defend. I mean not in this and the many other allusions which I have made to the degeneracy of our times, to argue that every Christian should be trained in schools of learning or human wisdom, but that the spirit of our procedure in making and keeping proselytes should be enlightened and liberal, and the character of our preaching strong and manly as well as sound. That

we should rejoice in the illumination of the age, and the cultivation of the public mind, as giving us a higher tribunal than hath perhaps ever existed, before which to plead the oracles of God—before which to come in all the strength and loveliness of our cause, asking a verdict not from their toleration of us its advocates, but upon their conscience, and from the demonstration of its truth.

In such a manner we have endeavoured to conduct the discourse, which we now bring to a close. Whether it may gain the conviction of those to whom it is addressed, we leave in the hands of God, who giveth the increase, possessing within ourselves the satisfaction of having designed and endeavoured the best; adding to all, this our solemn conviction: That until advocates of religion do arise to make unhallowed poets, and undevout dealers in science, and intemperate advocates of policy, and all other pleaders before the public mind, give place, and know the inferiority of their various provinces to this of ours—till this most fatal error, that our subject is second-rate, be dissipated by a first-rate advocation of it—till we can shift these others into the back ground of the great theatre of thought, by clear superiority in the treatment of our subject, we shall never see the men of understanding in this nation brought back to the fountains of living water, from which their fathers drew the life of all their greatness.

Many will think it an unchristian thing to reason thus violently, and many will think it altogether unintelligible; and to ourselves it would feel

unseemly, did we not reassure ourselves by looking around.—They are ruling and they are ruled, but God's oracles rule them not. They are studying every record of antiquity in their seats of learning, but the record of God, and of him whom he hath sent, is almost unheeded. They enjoy every communion of society, of pleasure, of enterprise, this world affords; but little communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. They carry on commerce with all lands, the bustle and noise of their traffic fill the whole earth; they go to and fro, and knowledge is increased,—but how few in the hasting crowd are hasting after the kingdom of God! Meanwhile death sweepeth on with his chilling blast, freezing up the life of generations, catching their spirits unblessed with any preparation of peace, quenching hope, and binding destiny for evermore. Their graves are dressed, and their tombs are adorned:—but their spirits, where are they? How oft hath this city, where I now write these lamentations over a thoughtless age, been filled and emptied of her people since first she reared her imperial head! How many generations of her revellers have gone to another kind of revelry; how many generations of her gay courtiers to a royal residence where courtier-arts are not; how many generations of her toilsome tradesmen to the place of silence, whither no gain can follow them! How time hath swept over her, age after age, with its consuming wave, swallowing every living thing, and bearing it away unto the shores of eternity! The sight and thought of all which is

my assurance, that I have not in the heat of my feelings surpassed the merit of the case. The theme is fitter for an indignant prophet, than an uninspired sinful man.

But the increase is of the Lord. May He honour these thoughts to find a welcome in every breast which weighs them—may He carry these warnings to the conscience of every one whose eye peruseth them. And may his oracles come forth to guide the proceedings of men, that they may dwell together in love and unity, and come at length to the everlasting habitation of his holiness. Amen.

END OF THE ORATIONS.

TO THE

REV. ROBERT GORDON,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, EDINBURGH.

My worthy Friend,

The design of the following Argument, which with all affection and esteem I dedicate to you, is to recover the great subject of Judgment to Come, from poetical visionaries on the one hand, and from religious rhapsodists on the other; and to place it upon the foundation of divine revelation, of human understanding, and the common good. The revelation of God upon the subject is brought forward, and I endeavour to show that it commends itself to every noble sentiment of the human breast, and to every worthy interest of human life. For it seems to me that upon religion we are growing wiser than our fathers, who were content with a train of human authorities, and that this age requireth religious truth to be justified, like other truth, by showing its benefits to the mind itself, and to society at

large. The poets and the economists are quite alive to this advancement of the public mind, and alteration of the public taste, of whom the former address our imagination and our heart, the latter our interests;—bases upon which they have reared up by far the most rival influences to religion—the school of Sentiment, which holds of the former; and the school of Politics, which holds of the latter. Now being convinced that besides a Creed, there is in our religion the most elevated sentiment, and the greatest advantage both public and private, I see not but we should fight and overthrow these rivals with their own weapons, by addressing their disciples upon that side on which their ear is open. For their ear is shut, and I hope the ear of all men is for ever shut, to the authority of names; and it is vain now to quote the opinions of saints or reformers, or councils or assemblies, in support of any truth. They even hold cheap our venerable theological language, though it can boast of great antiquity, and they insist upon its being translated into common phrases, that they may understand its meaning. And the misery is, they will not listen unless we gratify them in this reasonable request, but allow

us to have our disputations to ourselves while we cover them with that venerable disguise. In order, therefore, to have a chance of a hearing, I have refrained from systematic forms of speech, and endeavoured to speak of each subject in terms proper to it, and to address each feeling in the language most likely to move it—in short, to argue like a *man*, not a *theologian*; like a *Christian*, not a *churchman*.

It seems to me, my dear friend, that, like the Botanists, we should give up the artificial and adopt the natural method, in treating religion; and, instead of steering wide among disputed questions, bear down at once upon the occupations of the heart and life of man. They care not for our controversial warfare, they laugh at our antiquated method of handling questions—and so they perish from the way of truth, because of the unintelligible signals which we hang out. For this noble office, of delivering the truth from a contemptible imprisonment, and enshrining it in the good feelings, good sense, and common weal of men, which, being unchangeable in their nature, are the only proper receptacles for the unchangeable truth of

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revelation, I know not among my clerical friends any one better qualified than yourself. Your general knowledge, your familiarity with the accurate methods of science, your estimation of divine truth, and, above all, your catholic spirit and emancipation from churchman or sectarian intolerance, present you to my mind as eminently fitted for bringing the public affection back again to the doctrines of revealed truth. I crave your forgiveness for saying this so publicly; but my heart's desire is to see that thing in which the world is most interested, established before the world in the highest and most honourable style, in order that it may have the chance of being held by the world in the dearest and the nearest place.

I am,

My dear and worthy Friend,

Yours,

In the bonds of the Gospel,

EDW. IRVING.

Caledonian Church,
Hatton Garden.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART I.

THE PLAN OF THE ARGUMENT; WITH AN INQUIRY INTO RESPONSIBILITY IN GENERAL, AND GOD'S RIGHT TO PLACE THE WORLD UNDER RESPONSIBILITY.

An Argument, or Apology, (for either of these words will denote that undertaking to which I now address myself in devout dependence upon Almighty God) ought, as is the manner of ordinary judicial questions, First, To choose the tribunal before which the question is to be tried; Secondly, To define the exact point which is brought into issue; and, Thirdly, To open up the line of argument or defence that is to be pursued. These preliminaries we shall now settle with our readers, before whose unbiassed judgments we are about to propound the merits of the most momentous question that ever came before them for a verdict.

The tribunal before which we choose to plead this most grave and momentous question, is the whole reason or understanding of man. Not his intellect merely, to which common arguments are addressed, but his affections, his interests, his hopes, his fears, his wishes,—in one word, his

whole undivided soul. It is not with the intention of confusing his judgment, that we will endeavour to take his human nature upon every side, but because we think our case so important and so good as to solicit the verdict of every faculty which human nature possesseth. We feel that questions touching the truths of revelation have been too long treated in a logical or scholastic method, which doth address itself to I know not what fraction of the mind; and not finding this used in Scripture, or successful in practice, we are disposed to try another method, and appeal our cause to every sympathy of the soul which it doth naturally bear upon. We shall speak, according as it suits the topic in hand, to the parts of human nature which the poet addresseth, to the parts of human nature which the economist addresseth, no less than to those which the logician addresseth. Nevertheless, after a logical method we shall do so; that is, we shall present before these affections of the mind our question in a fair and undisguised form, without fear and without partiality. Therefore, all we ask of our reader, who is our judge, is to have the eyes of his mind as much as possible unveiled from any prejudice, and the affections of his nature unrestrained by any antient habit from moving with natural freedom to whatever may have charms in his eye. For, the subject which we have to bring before him is one in which every faculty of his nature is interested, requiring imagination to conceive its ample bounds, judgment to weigh its justice,

hope and fear to feel its consequences, and affection to embrace all the tender circumstances of its revelation—even the subject of Judgment to Come, which will decide, to every soul that readeth these pages, its destiny for ever and ever.

The question which we come next to define, after having chosen the tribunal before which it is to be agitated, is the whole matter of human responsibility and future judgment, as they are set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Our instruction, or our *brief*, to speak technically, is taken from the revelation of God, to which we would not willingly add one idea of our own, as we would not withhold, for the sake of easing the burden of our theme, any one idea which it contains. The revelation, the whole revelation, and nothing but the revelation, upon the subject of our responsibility, and our condemnation or acquittal, is the thing which we undertake to argue for, and to justify before every noble attribute of human nature. We hold no question upon the *authenticity* of the revelation, which we take altogether for granted; we have ado with its *matter* only; so that our business is not with the believer or the unbeliever, but with the *man*. Here is a certain future transaction revealed, as consequent upon a certain constitution of things, also revealed. We inquire not how nor whence it hath come; we take it as we find it, and inquire whether it be a just thing, an honourable thing, an advantageous thing to the nature and condition of those to whom it is known. We in-

quire not with respect to any, save such as have had it revealed to them, because we think it is applicable to none besides. It is part of a system of revealed truth—the keystone, as it were, of the system, and cannot be applied but as a part of it. Therefore in justice it is not right, and certainly in point of fact it is not our intention, to apply it to any others than to those unto whom revelation hath come.

But whereas an act of judgment presupposeth something which is to be judged of, and implies something good or bad which is to follow thereon; it is absolutely necessary to an argument or apology for Judgment to Come, that the thing should be developed upon which judgment is to pass, and consequences to follow after judgment hath been passed. The assize is not the first act, but the second act of a drama which is not yet closed. The first act is the occurrence which is charged upon, the second act is the decision, and the third is the execution of the verdict—and there the matter endeth. But our argument we do not intend to conclude therewith; for, knowing the mighty stake which is in issue to every one who readeth this discourse, we should have but ill discharged our duty to his soul and to our God, for whose sakes we enter the lists of this controversy, were we not to add to the completed representation something which might turn to a good purpose those anxieties which it may please God to awaken; and if they be not awakened, we should discharge our duty still worse, did we not cast

aside all reserves, awaken all sympathies and energies, and with heart, strength, soul and might, cast ourselves upon the barriers which are defending conscience from the invasion of truth.

Therefore, after this order will our discourse proceed:—First, we shall set forth the constitution of divine government upon which this judgment is to be passed. Then we shall treat of the actual judgment; then of the issues of the judgment; and, lastly, do our endeavour to guide the people into the way of salvation from the judgment, concerning which, if they should continue reckless, we shall strike a note to thrill the drowsy chambers of the soul, and awaken it from its fatal slumbers.

Such is the order in which we propose to lay the whole subject of Judgment to Come before the whole comprehension and feeling of the soul; in doing which we shall take all liberty of discourse, abstaining from the technical forms of theology, which half the world does not understand, and the other half seems heartily disposed to forget. We shall also indulge in disquisition, to clear the subject of obscurity; and in digression, to render it entertaining; and in application, to touch, in passing, any interest or emotion which may be affected;—all however subsidiary to the great object which we have proposed, of justifying and commending this part of divine revelation to the hearts of men.

In which, if we are enabled to succeed, we shall

have done them an unspeakable service. For this coming event, which to every man is the decision of the everlasting future, being understood, and seated in our high regards, will naturally cast forward into time the brightness of its hopes and the shadow of its fears. Calling up from their graves all our past transactions, and arraying against us every thing as when it was first conceived. The judgment ought to give value to every current thought, and importance to every passing act, making life a diligent, serious occupation of time, instead of a laborious destruction of it, or an idle gay diversion. Thought would become a constant device for the good ends which God hath set before us, and action a constant enterprise to bring these ends about, and (seeing it is placed within the power of every creature to find acceptance of his Judge, and everlasting glory) life would become full not only of good endeavours but joyful prospects, were men convinced and mindful of the last day, which is to sum up all the past and decide all the future of their existence.

There manifestly wants some such husbanding and equalizing power to make the faculties of man turn themselves to the most account. Some drop asleep amidst sensual gratifications, and do nothing for the common weal but consume its stores—others idle amongst trifles, passing the bright season of youth in vain and empty shows —others fight against their own and the public peace, wielding every power they can command for the aggrandizement of themselves at every

hazard and expense. There is no spring that never runs down to move the machinery of a single man's life; there is no common spring that never runs down to move harmoniously the combined machinery of society. Powers of good are slumbering for want of a call; instruments rusting for want of an occasion; and a meagre unsatisfying recollection of occasions lost and time mispent, is the portion of almost every man.—What labborious trifling, what ingenuity of wickedness, what self-torturing ennui, what artificial stimulants, what brutalizing excess there is in this weary world! To reach distinction and power, you must fight battles, and be the death of thousands. To be a hero, you must wade through seas of blood. To be a statesman, you must submit the soul to suppleness, and be the creature of creatures like yourself. There wanteth a power to enable a man to turn the wheel of his own destiny, and by diligence and patience to arrive at true greatness and blessedness.

To set forth such a power is the argument of our present discourse, to the perusal of which we pray those who take it up to bring with them a vigorous manly understanding, no crouching timorous faith, for it is our purpose, in the strength of God, the giver of all understanding, to examine this his great revelation of Judgment to Come, with freedom and fairness, and to try if it will stand the test of inquiry and objection. We are not to advocate or eulogize it, as we lately did the Divine Oracles, but we are to expound it

according to the Scriptures, and see how it suits human nature, and makes for human welfare. We intend that it should speak for itself, and become its own argument; and by its own grave and weighty character rebuke and ashame those idle parodies of it, which have lately issued from the seething brains of irreligious poets. Our Apology for Judgment to Come, against these idle visionaries and wasteful prodigals of God's high gifts, is to the common sense and good feelings of men. —We would bring the question back from the tribunal of wit and fancy, and ribaldry and worldly wisdom, to the tribunal of grave judgment, that old and hoary discerner of truth.

We are then, first of all, to be occupied with the developement of that which must always precede judgment, *viz.* the promulgated law or statute upon which judgment is to be held. This is the divine constitution contained in the word of God, which it behoves us to understand before we can be able to estimate the fairness of the trial or the justice of the verdict that is to pass thereon. To unfold that constitution, therefore, we would address ourselves without delay, did a preliminary question not suggest itself—What good the Almighty proposes by laying us under responsibility, and what right he hath to do so? The mind doth not easily relinquish its own rule at any time, and looks for a sufficient inducement. And it is to be expected that the Creator, who knows the nature of his handiwork, should consult for that nature he has given it, and in presenting any supplementary

code of government, accommodate himself to the conditions in which it is already placed. This is a preliminary inquiry, upon which the mind looks to have satisfaction, before it will go with good accord into the details of any constitution or judgment thereon. The matter of right is the first question, which being disposed of, we are then welcome to make our propositions.

That all fairness may be allowed to that human nature, which is the honoured tribunal we plead before, we shall therefore search a little into her ways, and see whether she doth better to be in a state of responsibility, or to be discharged into her own unbounded freedom. Then we shall examine the grounds upon which the Almighty places himself forward as her lawgiver, and the general tendency of that responsibility with which he hath overlaid her goings out and her comings in, which will occupy the remainder of this first division of our discourse. In addressing ourselves to which inquiry, Whether human nature does well to sit under a condition of responsibility? we judge it the most pleasant and satisfactory method of proceeding, to look into the real form which she puts on in families, and in political bodies, and private friendships, and the other institutions which distinguish the nature of men from the nature of the lower animals—then to examine whether there is any analogy between what is congenial to her in these institutions and that responsibility under which God hath placed her by his judgment.

From the earliest dawn of comprehension, our parents lay down to us things to be done and things to be avoided; praising or blaming, rewarding or punishing, according to our performances. In this they are prompted by a regard to our future happiness, so far as they can discern the way to it; otherwise they would never impose painful restraints upon those whom they love. Accordingly, so soon as we are able to weigh the consequences of things, they point out the good they would secure, and the evil they would avoid by this early discipline, thereby bringing our own will to go along with theirs, and so securing us by two principles, that of parental authority, and that of advantage foreseen. Here from the very first, are all the elements of government—a good end to be secured for the little state—laws drawn out and made known for securing it—one who persuades obedience to them and sees them obeyed, and if disobeyed, visits the offence with such treatment as may recal the offender, and be a warning to the rest. The parent who is at the head of this little administration is so far from being divested of the sense of responsibility, that he is the one perhaps who feels it most. He makes no regulation according to blind wilfulness, but consults for the future welfare of his offspring—he studies their nature, and so soon as it is ripe, he addresses their understanding—he executes justice amongst them, and preserves consistency in his judgment, and mingles a reasonable allowance of liberty with

the painfulness of restraint; so that he is responsible to his own wisdom, to their future welfare, to exact justice, besides being responsible to higher powers, which, for the sake of our argument, we keep out of the question. Now, before we pass on to another topic, I pray you to observe, that no family estate would prosper, however well joined by affection and interest, or well ordered by wise regulations, were there not added a judgment, or calling to account when it is necessary; all the rest would go for nought, were there not in the rear of all, the certainty of judgment to pass upon offences. For consider, that the reason which moves you to lay down rules to your children is not that you love to govern, or to see them restrained of their liberty, or that they have a natural pleasure in obeying; but that you take pity upon their ignorance of the world, and are acquainted with the tendency of their nature to go astray, and would be wanting in affection, and in carefulness, did you not lay down to them the course which you judged best. Now if you do but make them acquainted, taking no cognizance of their observance, and calling no account of it, then you only half attain your kindly object, or rather you do not attain it at all. They know your opinion only, but at first they know not how to value your opinion, they should also know your smiles, your favour, your reward upon the good, your frowns, your discountenance, your chastisement upon the evil. Your

commands will be forgotten, if not frequently recommended by all the tokens of affection, and the contrary discommended by all the tokens of displeasure. Therefore in every family there goes on not only a silent operation of law-giving, but also a secret operation of law-enforcing, a system of rewards and punishments;—judgment as well as affection being a standing order of the house.

Now if from the family we pass upwards to the state, we shall find the same principle of responsibility regulating and ruling its affairs, with this difference, that here every thing is open and visible; whereas in the other, it was silent and invisible, yet not on that account the less certain or strong. The first thing in the state is to obtain a lawgiver, no one being so naturally the guardian of the rest as the father is of the family, who are his offspring and his dependants. Superior wisdom in the infancy of states was wont to confer this distinction of lawgiver which nature had not decided. This difficulty being got over, and a code of laws having been adopted and spread abroad, there begins a general bending of the common will to its obedience, and whosoever does not choose to obey, is fain to take his leave of the society. The judge is no part of the law, but only the mouth which utters it. The magistrate also is no part of the law, but only the hand to enforce it. The law, the naked law, is sovereign over all. And when a necessity arises for amending the law, then the best method is taken of collecting the common sentiment of the community.

But no one voice can alter the law, or set the law at naught—no, not the highest personage of the realm, who has his powers defined no less strictly than the meanest. Thus men, in order to bring themselves to any condition of prosperity or enjoyment, find it necessary to submit themselves to a law, to disarm themselves of their natural strength and natural freedom, and go into a state of bondage and responsibility to the common consent or recorded conscience of those amongst whom they dwell. Now here again we remark, that were there not judgment days, no wisdom nor wise administration could protect the law from being trampled under foot of men. You might preach obedience at every corner, and show how it promotes the good of each, by securing the welfare and peace of the whole; but it were vain, had you not a regular roll made up of the offenders, and a regular assize holden of their offences, and proper sentences adjudged to their transgression. Some would always be found ignorant enough not to comprehend their own well-being secured in the common weal—others wilful enough to provide for themselves at the expense of the common weal, and therefore measures must be taken that the well-informed and well-disposed suffer not at the hands of the ignorant and the wicked.—Judgment and discrimination must take place, or the whole platform of a well-ordered state will be speedily undermined.

What hath been said of our living under constant responsibility to law and judgment in the

family and in the state, is no less true of the many other relationships which preserve and comfort life. Those of servant to master, and wife to husband, we do not speak of, because they are in some measure under cognizance of the law; yet who does not know that our happiness in them is secured far more by unseen and unknown acts of mutual obligation between the parties, and that an interior state of responsibility becomes generated of its own accord. A master hath enjoyment in his household according as he fulfils to them kindly and faithfully his duties of encouragement, and his duties of discouragement, from which when he withdraws his care, he ceases to be respected; confusion introduces itself into the establishment, and disputes arise which call for the adjudication of law. In friendships, there are distinct obligations contracted of love and fidelity and mutual assistance, which not being discharged by either party, he is adjudged unworthy and cut off from our intimacy. In private circles of acquaintance, there is imposed another set of obligations, those of hospitality, good breeding, and general good offices; which being violated, the offender is marked, and perhaps excommunicated from the privileges of the society. In the general acknowledgments of politeness, such as street salutation, which is the loosest, largest kind of society, there are imposed manifold obligations of good behaviour, good temper, and even appearance suitable to our condition, of which a loose account and an occasional reckoning is kept.

These instances may serve to show how familiar the mind of man is to the feeling of responsibility, and how full his life is of its exercise; how he regulates himself after a law expressed or understood, and submits the issues of his character and his condition to judgment and arbitration, and is himself the judge and arbitrator of the character and condition of others. They also serve to show how necessary to the well-being of every society is a judgment of the members, and a punishment of the offenders. Nothing will do in its room—in the family state, where are our strongest affections, judgment is needed; in the political state, where are vested our strongest interests, judgment is needed; in our household state, where are vested our dearest enjoyments, judgment is needed; in our friendly state, where are vested our chief confidences, judgment is needed; in our social state, whence flow all mutual attentions, judgment is needed.

And while I thus argue the necessity of judgment, I am willing to allow that in each of these states, it is the last thing which should be resorted to, and should rather stand at the gate to guard the sanctuaries of society from evil intrusion, than enter in to regulate the service. Family duties should be fed with affection, political duties with the promotion of interest, friendly duties with unbosomed confidence, and duties of acquaintanceship with good and kindly offices. The terrors of judgment should stand to a side, and not interfere till the others have failed to preserve harmony and peace. Severity should be the last act of man to-

wards his brother men, as suspicion should be the last sentiment he admits into his bosom. Yet just as it doth not hinder us from keeping our eyes open to investigate the truth, that we know such investigations do often lead to suspicion, it ought not to hinder our hearts from discharging copiously their streams of affection that we know it doth, in the end, often lead to judge and condemn the niggard and unfair return of others. The conclusion is, that from no existing state, wherein man stands related to man, can judgment and execution of judgment be spared, though they ought never to be introduced till all other measures have failed. Bearing this conclusion in mind, let us go forward to examine the responsibility whereto God hath subjected us.

He hath given a law for the regulation of the heart and life of man, and hath been at pains to make it manifest as being from himself, by visitation of angels and of his own awful presence, by inspiration of holy men whom he clothed with heavenly powers—and, finally, by the hands of his own Son, whom he raised from the dead and took up into heaven until the restitution of all things. With these tokens of its being his will, it is offered to the world, to take it or not as they please. Some have never had the offer of it, with whose case we have not to deal. We have had the offer of it, and in our next discourse we are to examine whether it will do us good to accept it, or whether there be in it any thing to disconcert the nature of man. In the mean time, we go into the previous

question upon what God builds his claim to prescribe to us in any form, and by what feelings the sense of reponsibility in this new instance is bound upon our minds.

Now, in turning over the sacred books to examine into this previous question, we find them full of various information concerning the interest which God hath taken in man from the very first, and the schemes which he hath on foot to ameliorate our state, the desire he hath to contribute to our present happiness, and the views he hath for our future glory. He presents himself as our father, who first breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and ever since hath nourished and brought us up as children:—who prepared the earth for our habitation; and for our sakes made its womb to teem with food, with beauty and with life.—For our sakes no less he garnished the heavens and created the whole host of them with the breath of his mouth, bringing the sun forth from his chamber every morning, with the joy of a bridegroom and a giant's strength, to shed his cheerful light over the face of creation, and draw blooming life from the cold bosom of the ground.—From him also was derived the wonderful workmanship of our frames—the eye, in whose small orb of beauty is pencilled the whole of heaven and of earth, for the mind to peruse and know and possess and rejoice over, even as if the whole universe were her own—the ear, in whose vocal chambers are entertained harmonious numbers, the melody

of rejoicing nature, the welcomes and salutations of friends, the whisperings of love, the voices of parents and of children, with all the sweetness that resideth in the tongue of man! His also is the gift of the beating heart, flooding all the hidden recesses of the human frame with the tide of life—his the cunning of the hand, whose workmanship turns rude and raw materials to pleasant forms and wholesome uses,—his the whole vital frame of man, is a world of wonders within itself, a world of bounty, and, if rightly used, a world of finest enjoyments.—His also the mysteries of the soul within—the judgment, which weighs in a balance all contending thoughts, extracting wisdom out of folly, and extricating order out of confusion; the memory, recorder of the soul, in whose books are chronicled the accidents of the changing world, and the fluctuating moods of the mind itself; fancy, the eye of the soul, which scales the heavens and circles round the verge and circuits of all possible existence; hope, the purveyer of happiness, which peoples the hidden future with brighter forms and happier accidents than ever possessed the present, offering to the soul the foretaste of every joy; affection, the nurse of joy, whose full bosom can cherish a thousand objects without being impoverished, but rather replenished, a storehouse inexhaustible towards the brotherhood and sisterhood of this earth, as the storehouse of God is inexhaustible to the universal world; finally, conscience, the arbitrator of the soul, and the touchstone of the

evil and the good, whose voice within our breast is the echo of the voice of God.—These, all these, whose varied action and movement constitutes the maze of thought, the mystery of life, the continuous chain of being—God hath given us to know that we hold of his hand, and during his pleasure, and out of the fulness of his care.

Upon which tokens of his affectionate bounty, not upon bare authority, command, and fear, God desireth to form a union and intimacy with the human soul. As we love our parents from whom we derived our being, sustenance, and protection while we stood in need, and, afterwards proof of unchanging and undying love, so God would have us love him in whom we live and move and breathe and have our being, and from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift. And as out of this strong affection we not only obey, but honour the commandments of our father and mother, so willeth he that we should honour and obey the commandments of our father in heaven. As we look up to a master in whose house we dwell, and at whose plentiful board we feed — with whose smiles we are recreated, and whose service is gentle and sweet—so God wisheth us to look up to him, in whose replenished house of nature he hath given us a habitation, and from whose bountiful table of providence we have a plentiful living, and whose service is full of virtue, health, and joy.—As we love a friend who took us by the hand in youth, and helped us step by step up the

hill of life, and found for our feet a room to rest in, and for our hands an occupation to work at; so God wisheth to be loved for having taken us up from the womb, and compassed us from our childhood, and found us favour in the sight of men.—As we revere a master of wisdom, who nursed our opening mind, and fed it with knowledge and with prudence, until the way of truth and peacefulness lay disclosed before us; so God wisheth us to be revered for giving to our souls all the faculties of knowledge, and to nature all the hidden truths which these faculties reveal. In truth, there is not an excellent attachment by which the sons of men are bound together, which doth not bind us more strongly to God, and lay the foundation of all generous and noble sentiments towards him within the mind—of all loving, dutiful, reverential conduct towards him in our outward walk and conversation.

Therefore we greatly err when we imagine his revelation to be nothing, save a code of laws and statutes enforced by awful authority and awful judgment to come. Doubtless it contains a code of laws, but these laws set in the bosom of a thousand noble sentiments and warm affections and generous promises towards us—such as are wont to catch and captivate and ravish the spirit when uttered by a mortal—why they should not when uttered by the great immortal, eternal, and invisible, I know not, except that we are so lost in bustle and agitation as seldom to be in sufficient repose to hear and meditate his voice. No one

calls filial obedience, friendly offices, grateful returns, honourings of the wise, tributes to the good—no one calleth these a bondage; they are the effusions of generous hearts, the aspirations of noble desires, and the sure promise of future excellence; and he who can afford them not and calls them bondage, is himself a bondsman to his niggard selfishness and his wretched temper. No more shall any one call veneration of God the common father—gratitude to God the common giver—obedience of God the fountain of wisdom—devotion to God the length of our days and the strength of our life—call these most exalted, most refined sentiments of the soul, bondage, slavery, and blind subserviency; or I hold him heartless, thoughtless, and unholy—a man divested of his crown of glory, blind to the excellencies of the earth, deaf to the harmonies of nature, dead and insensible to the ebbs and flows, the wants and the possessions of human life.

Let no one accuse God of tyranny or self-willedness, or wrest him from his fatherly seat of affection and bounty among his children, to instate him in a throne of stern and unreasonable sovereignty, from being a most generous parent and patron, convert him into a frowning judge, because He hath seen it necessary, when presenting his scheme of government unto men, to introduce into it the judgment of all and the punishment of the rebellious—two conditions which we found were never wanting in any kind of society or association. If a son complains not against his father for entering

among his affections both command, inquiry and judgment—if a subject complain not against the law for entering amongst its wise and wholesome provisions interdicts, threats and penalties—if a friend is content to recognise the obligations and to bow contented to the dissolution of friendship, as well as to taste its enjoyments. And so of love, of marriage, of intimacy, of acquaintance, and every other form of union, fast or loose, why, in the name of consistency, will any one revolt that God, when he presented every tie of affection, duty, and interest, and sought to come about the heart by every fond enticement, did also add the other element of all relationship, that if we failed, were obstinate and rebellious, there should be an account and a punishment?

Had there not been such an account and punishment, God might have spared his pains in promulgating any laws for the guidance of man. For it has been well shown by the greatest philosopher, and perhaps the most truth-loving man* that England hath produced, that a law is nothing unless it be supported by rewards and punishments. And certainly there never was a law upon the earth that was not so supported. But if these laws of God were mere expressions of his will, not consultations for our welfare, having more of rigour in them than was necessary, harassing life out of its natural joy and contentment, and reducing us all into an unmanly servitude—then there might be reason to com-

* Locke—in the Essay on Human Understanding.

plain of inquisitorial judgment and undue severity. But waving the right of the Creator to have his will out of his creature, which is an argument God never uses, except when the creature sets himself into a most daring attitude—(I know only once in Scripture it is used, in the ixth of the Romans, against a most inveterate and incorrigible fault-finder and objector, whom there was no other way of putting down)—waving God's right, which he seldom rests his commandments upon, it is most apparent from the whole tenor of Scripture, that the happiness of the creature, not his own will, is his aim. He had thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers enow to rule over, if it was power he wanted. He could have created another world in room of this, if he had found his empire incomplete. He could have rid the universe of us if we had been an eyesore to him—or put us out of the way as he did the angels that kept not their first estate. It was an interest in us, a deep and pathetic interest, which moved him to interfere so often, and draw us out of sin under his own good government—to commission counsellor after counsellor, and to part at length with his own well-beloved Son. It is manifest, from the whole strain and language of the revelation, that it is intended for our happiness. Its name is the Gospel, that is, good news—it sets forth redemption, that is, deliverance out of slavery—salvation, that is, keeping from the power of evil, forgiveness, comfort, and consolation. It summoneth to glory and renown, to victory and triumph, and an im-

mortal crown. It commandeth not to penance or monastic severity, but to honest, comely deeds; forbideth dishonesty, dishonour, and untruth; encourageth love and kindness; hateth hardness of heart and harshness of behaviour; breathes gentleness, peace, and charity; denounces strife, war, and bloodshed; knowledge it encourages, purity and love still more: all these virtuous and worthy qualities of heart and life it sustains and crowns with the promise of life and blessedness everlasting. The spirit of the law therefore, is to rejoice the heart, to convert the soul, to enlighten the eyes, and give understanding to the simple. And, if we had leisure to trace its effects upon the world, we should find that it hath tended in every instance to promote its happiness and prosperity.

Here then is an argument which the law hath within itself, in addition to these many obligations mentioned above, which the author hath upon us for all his bountiful gifts. It is not only the voice of God our parent, preserver, patron, and friend—but it is the devise of wisdom for securing the welfare of the world. It is bound upon us not only by early and affectionate ties of nature, but by ties of interest—not only a bond upon the heart, but a preservative of peace between man and man, and the insurance of the common safety. Thus it hath in it all that gives to political government reverence and authority. It is a constitution of social intercourse for the wide world, leaguing men together in community—owning no locality of jurisdiction or separation of interests,

but embracing human nature every where, extending from pole to pole, and round the five zones of the earth. Now, among the many causes, well or ill grounded, against any political institution, I never heard any one murmer against tribunals of justice and execution of judgment. No one ever imagined that a state could stand without a judge and a punishment. The mode may be objected against—the facility or the severity—but the necessity of the thing was never questioned. On the same ground, it is necessary to the stability and extension of this universal law for the hearts and lives of men.

While I thus argue from all kind of analogies the reasonableness and pleasure of responsibility to God, with the necessity of judgment in the divine as in the human procedure, I am willing to admit that here also punishment should be the last direful resource, only to be called in when every thing else has failed. Man should be tried by every means before you have recourse to the cruelty of punishment. Address every nobler part before you make your appeal to fear—work upon him by every argument to change his course, before you pass a sentence upon him which cuts him off from repentance, and makes an end of his prospects for ever. Now I fearlessly appeal to the knowledge and experience of every one, if God is not slow to judgment, and patient to pursue every method of grace and love—willing to take repentance at any season, to wipe all past misdemeanours away, so that we will turn and behave towards him with affection. In this respect the divine

government surpasses all other governments whatever. A father will take his prodigal son back to his bosom, and forget in the transports of his affection, all the follies of a child who was lost and now is found. But a father will not do this many times; once and again, and peradventure thrice. But if he find promises vain, confidence betrayed, and affection unanswered, he is compelled for the credit of his house and the sustenance of parental authority, to bid the perverse youth begone, and to cut him off from his inheritance. So also in every other association, whether of nature or of compact. Political administrations are less patient, because it is not private affection but common interest they steer upon, yet even there a first offence hath mitigation of punishment, perhaps forgiveness—a second sometimes commutation of punishment—but an old offender, one in habit and repute an offender, gets the heavier doom. Private friendship will hardly cement again when its duties have been once violated. In business, one who hath been dishonest to his engagements is not easily trusted the second time. There is need for a sharp outlook in all the affairs of life; and though Mercy hath, we trust, often a glorious pre-eminence in men's hearts, as in God's, still she cannot bear to be trampled on or abused; otherwise she steps to a side, and lets Justice with her scales and sword come in to weigh and determine. But, with God, mercy rejoiceth over judgment. All a man's lifetime is the reign of grace. Till he closes his eyes mercy weeps over him, to

melt his stony heart. God's own Son, whose daughter Mercy is, weeps over him to melt his stony heart—He shows to him his wounds and his cross, telling him he hath died once, and could die again to save him. There is no argument he does not use—calling upon us by our antient noble stock from God derived, not to degenerate—calling upon us by all heavenly affections lurking still within us, love of excellence, gratitude for favours, desire of self-satisfaction and inward peace, to attach ourselves to God—calling upon us by the assurance of a glorious regeneration, and reinstatement in the divine image through the powerful operation of the Spirit, to cleave unto the Lord;—finally, calling upon us by an unspeakable weight of glory to be revealed in heaven, to persevere in the service of God. There is nothing noble, nothing tender, nothing spirit-stirring, which the Son of man doth not address unto his brethren. His words drop over them like the tears of a mother over her darling child. He watches and waits for their late return—he comes to their sick-bed suing, and to their death-bed he comes praying. He stands at the door of every heart, and knocks. Our enemies he fought unto the death, and he hath conquered them in death. He hath singly beat our tyrants, and put into every man's hand a patent of his liberty. And now he goeth about and about amongst us, rousing us with songs and sweet melody to rise from slavery and be ourselves again. He asks nothing of us for what he hath done—he lays on no new mastery—but shows the ways of heaven and of sinless happy creatures, and craves us by the memory of

his death, and by our own eternal life—all our life long, craves us to be ourselves again, to be the noble sons of God as our father was.

Call you this a reign of terror? a reign of judgment? a reign of punishment? What then is a reign of mercy, persuasion, and forgiveness?—He takes no hostages of you, lays on no fines for the past, no penalties for the future—free forgiveness even unto the end, unto sincere repentance. Surely God is slower to judgment than man is—Surely unto the last he putteth off—Surely there is not any thing he would not do, sooner than bring it to the grand and finishing stroke of everlasting doom.

The argument of this discourse thus completes itself. Man, it seems, by all his institutions for securing his welfare is made for responsibility, and for submitting himself to judgment, when all other methods fail of preserving the peace. This is the nature of man, wherever he is found and into whatever community he enters. God, legislating for man, hath adapted himself to this his nature, placing him under responsibility; yet taking every measure of his wisdom, and applying to every faculty of human nature by each kindly, noble method, to secure sweet harmony; putting off issues of judgment to the last, and not ringing the knell of doom until every other note and signal hath entirely failed to have effect. Therefore, he having taken that course which men uniformly take and admire, is devoutly to be adored for accommodating himself so sweetly to our nature and our condition.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART II.

THE CONSTITUTION UNDER WHICH IT HATH PLEASED GOD TO PLACE THE WORLD.

HAVING shown at length in our former discourse that it is not unpleasant to the nature of man, nor uncongenial with the softest, tenderest relations of human life, to be held under responsibility to God, and amenable to his future judgment,—we now proceed to examine the constitution under which he hath actually placed us, and upon which he is to enter into judgment with the sons of men. For God, who in this respect might be a pattern to all lawgivers, hath so contrived it in his wisdom, that his laws and ordinances should be within narrow compass, and he hath brought them by his providence within the reach of small expense, while in his wisdom he hath written them, so that he who runneth may read, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. Upon man, therefore, the knowledge of them is incumbent; and surely he will not hold us guiltless if we refuse to lend our ear to the hearing of those words which he hath been at so much pains to reveal. Let us, therefore, gird up the loins of our mind, and draw near with full purpose to discover what the Lord our God, our creator and our preserver, our father and our friend, requireth of his

children, in order that, if we find it good and wholesome to our nature, we may walk before him in the cheerful obedience of an enlightened and convinced mind. For while allegiance to any constitution, human or divine, is blind prejudice and slavery, so long as you know it not, neither are convinced of its wisdom, it doth become, when the mind approves it as right and just, both dutiful and honourable to adhere to it; and the strictest obedience is then the greatest freedom, being emancipation from what the mind rejects and obedience to that which it approves.

There is a great peculiarity in the divine constitution, and a great difficulty in bringing it completely before the mind; not because of the number of its details, but because of that intermixture of justice and mercy in which God hath made it to consist. And yet, if he open our mind to comprehend, and guide our pen to express the wonderful harmony of these its parts, and the wise adaptation of the whole to the present condition and faculties of man, we shall present the purest, the most just, the most merciful institute under which man can live, and to which the mind will spontaneously offer the witness of every good and noble sentiment.

The first office, which the Christian lawgiver discharged, was to take to task the principles upon which men had been wont to regulate their sentiments and actions, and to substitute in their stead others by which they should be governed. This discourse, delivered upon the mount, which contains the spirit of his discipline, divides itself

into two parts:—First, of outward or overt acts—Secondly, of inward sentiments and feelings.

Amongst outward acts, he gives the first place to the inflicting of injuries. The law current in his day, and still current in all well-governed societies, that whosoever killed another should be in danger of the judgment, he refines upon, by threatening both judgment here and hell hereafter, to every one who, without a cause, should allow himself in anger against his brother, or rate him for a fool;—thus striking at the root of injuries, by prohibiting the hot and hasty language in which they originate, crushing quarrels in the bud, by making the first outbreak of them as criminal as their most lamentable termination. The second place he gives to the retaliating of injuries, upon which the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth—was the current maxim of his day, as it is still. This he utterly abrogates, forbidding to resent or even to resist evil, but to repay it with good;—a law which, being understood in the letter, would abrogate all law, making us slaves to the worst of masters, the evil passions and ungoverned wills of the wicked;—but being understood in the spirit, forbids all revenge of injury, and all defence which proceeds in the spirit of revenge; not prohibiting self-defence, nor suits for justice, nor restrainings of wickedness; but cautioning us to proceed in these with a benevolent spirit for the reformation of the evil-doer, for the maintenance of good order, and for the ascertaining of righteousness and truth. These two maxims, which compose the whole criminal code of Christ,

if obeyed, would put a stop to the inflicting and resenting of injuries from the greatest even to the least. They would abolish all hasty, heady quarrels, reconcile all cherished grudges and projected retaliations, and convert all arbitrations of differences and suits at law into a cool, quiet examination of the right and just, thus making all questions subservient to the ends of peace and good order. In the third place, comes the intercourse between man and woman, where, as before, his rule is to oppose the mischief in the beginning. An impure word, an unchaste look, a lustful desire, he makes of equal die with adultery complete; and he honours marriage as the holy threshold and sacred temple of these affections, which being once joined, is not, save on one account, to be dissolved, without incurring the guilt of infidelity in its most atrocious form. All antecedent life he covers with a robe of vestal purity —all subsequent he binds in a chain of duty dissolvable by nothing but one crime. After these laws upon injury and chastity, come truthfulness and sincerity in our speech; concerning which men are wont to make a distinction, sometimes vowing with a vow, and confirming with an oath, sometimes not. Perceiving that the effect of this distinction was to cast into a secondary place the ordinary every-day intercourse of speech, upon which mainly dependeth the good condition of life, he abrogates it altogether, and appoints that the simplest form of assent and denial—yea and nay—should be strong and binding as the most solemn imprecation.

Having thus restrained insincerity and indecency and injustice, in the very germ, he goes on to legislate for the unexpressed, unsignified movements of the inward man, which all former lawgivers had thought to be beside their office. Hatred and malevolence he prohibits in the very last condition of misery to which we can be reduced by the malice of others; for a curse ordering a blessing in return; for contempt, tenderness; for persecution, well-doing, according to the pattern of God, who showers his blessings upon the evil no less than upon the good. Ostentation and vanity, whether in our religious duties or in our natural gifts, he prohibits; and enjoins the last degree of secrecy in prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and other such avocations. Avarice, or the spirit of accumulation, he denounces as the service of mammon, who is the antagonist of God; anticipation and foresight he guards us against, lest they should destroy a due respect unto the providence of God, which feeds the raven and clothes the lilies of the field. Busying ourselves with the affairs of our neighbours, or scanning a brother's failings, he sets down as the sign of greater failings in ourselves, which he commands us to redress; giving, as the sum of all, this golden rule, That whatsoever we would that men should do unto us, we should do unto them.

Then, to confirm and sanction all the preceding laws, and others in the same strain, he allows of no religion, no worship, which hath not these practices and these sentiments within its bosom. One nourishing a grudge against any brother, he prohibits from depositing a gift upon the altar of God;

one disobeying his commandments in the least iota, and teaching men to do so, he accounts least in the kingdom of heaven; one who heareth them and doeth them not, confiding withal in the future approbation of God, he likens to a man building his house upon sand, which fell in the hour of trial, and carried him away in its ruins.

These laws differ from all others, not only in the originality of their principles, and in the altitude to which these principles arise, and in the pervading extent to which they go, but in this, above all, that not resting the offence in the degree but in the spirit, they establish it not by evidence of fact, but by evidence of conscience anterior to fact. It is in the state of passionateness in the soul, not the thousand passionate acts; it is in the state of vindictiveness in the soul, not the thousand vindictive acts; it is in the state of wantonness in the soul, not the thousand impure acts; it is in the state of insincerity in the soul, not the thousand breaches of covenant;—in these first conceptions of evil, which are, as it were, each the root of a wide-branching tree, the lawgiver of Christians finds the criminality to consist. As if the mind were a soil into which, if these seeds be admitted, they must necessarily grow and bear fruit and propagate their kind to an indefinite extent. Seeing then that into the secret place of the heart nothing penetrates but conscience and the eye of God; these two alone can arbitrate the matter. Evidence, therefore, on which all conviction in human institutions ought alone to proceed, is here clean out of the question. The crime is per-

petrated long ere it proclaims itself to the perception of the nicest judge. The law is addressed to the spirit of man, from which nothing is hid of its own designs or transactions, of which designs and transactions not the thousandth part do see the light. So that Christ's laws, though a thousand times less numerous, apply to a thousand times more cases than the laws of man.

But a jurisconsult would object to this as their greatest possible imperfection. He would say at once, To what serveth this their saintly purity, if so be that you cannot discern the offence, or bring up the offender to the bar, or if you had him there, could bring nothing home, unless a window should be opened into his breast to reveal the lights and shadows of his mind, or birds of the air should come and testify to his secret works? What availeth this canopy of perfection, extended so far above the head of all performance as hardly in any point to approximate it? Why confound the thought or even the design with the completed act? Why drive men distracted with the crimination of what they daily and hourly commit? These your christian laws are, in truth, properly speaking, no laws, but the abstract sentiment and disembodied spirit of law, the justice and the purity, by the steadiness of which law steers its course, but which, like the two poles of the earth, are for ever defended against all approach. They cannot be applied by any judge, they cannot be watched over by any police, or executed by any human power. Evidence cannot be had, conviction cannot be brought home, and therefore no issue can

follow. You might set up a court of conscience, but courts of conscience have uniformly become courts of injustice and oppression.

Now as these peculiarities, by which the Christian is essentially distinguished from every other code, do manifest that it was not meant for being adopted into the courts of men; it becomes necessary to examine what is its use, seeing it cannot be enforced; where its proper field of operation lies; and how it bears upon those institutions which hold society together. From this inquiry it will appear, that its appeal to conscience, and its sublime purity, are the two very qualities by which it is fitted to gain ascendency and awaken enthusiasm in the heart, to become the parent of moral feeling, and of good character in the individual, and in the general to patronize enlightened obedience to every wise social institution. In order to exhibit this justification and praise, it becomes necessary to enter a little into the nature of statute law, that by discovering its limited operation, we may perceive the necessity of the Christian institution to do for our well-being that office to which no written, executed law of man maketh any pretension.

Human laws, judged of and executed by man, have in them properly no moral sanction whatever, as has been well shown by the shrewdest jurisconsult, yet perhaps most limited philosopher, of the day.* They make no appeal to conscience, but to fact. Properly speaking, they

* Mr. Bentham.

never find the verdict of innocent, but not proven, and when they find a verdict of guilty, it may or may not, as it happens, be a guilty act in the eye of conscience and of God. They aim at nothing but the advancement of the common weal; all the hold, which they have any right to take of their subjects, is by their private weal; which they can amerce or advantage; and all the guardianship they can have over them is but as far as the eye of their officers can discern actions, their ear hear words, or their shrewdness infer actions from circumstantial evidence. A man may be clear before God, whom nevertheless law hath sentenced to the utmost ignominy and loss; of which all martyrs for religion's sake, all sufferers for conscience' sake, are examples. But while we confine the observation of law to outward uttered acts, and its power to physical deprivations, we do not deny, that it so happens in all well regulated states, both that immorality precedes, and ignominy follows the breach of law in the generality of cases. But this is an accidental not a necessary connection. It arises from the connection there is between moral purity and the common weal, between right conduct and real advantage, which connection the jurisconsult, alluded to above, hath made the basis of all positive law—where he is right; and he hath also made it the basis of all intercourse between man and man, and of all judgments which the mind passes upon itself, in which he is not only wrong in making the effect stand before the cause, but by which he would overthrow, through the corruption of the individual, that very common-

weal, which through the body corporate his works are so well fitted to sustain.

Seeing then that the laws of the state do reach no farther than to observed acts, and do not necessarily bring self-accusation in their train, (which might also be shown of the laws of the family, of friendship, of social intercourse, and of every other responsibility of which the eye of man is the guardian,) we ask, Where is the instrument for keeping in check the evil parts of human nature within the breast, which, after a period of hidden incubation there, hatch plots and perpetrations? Where is the instrument for guiding a man to the good and ill of affection, of desire, of ambition, of knowledge, of temper; which verily are the masters over the tongue that speaks, and the hand that performs? Where is the reward for good conduct, the punishment for evil conduct, in the little republic within the breast? There are no such provisions in any of the institutions over which the king and the judge preside; for, long ere human nature comes under their cognizance, while we are scions growing around our parents, not yet come under the cognizance of those inspecting eyes which range abroad to distinguish the good from the evil, even already is the texture of the future man weaving—the weaknesses, the diseases of the spirit engendering—its strength, its beauty and its fruitfulness, becoming implanted. If education mean any thing, it is to train a man for fulfiling the condition of child, friend, parent, spouse, master, servant and citizen. Now, I ask, how is that education to proceed? Are we to bring,

lumbering into the school, the statutes at large, those musty volumes which no living wight did ever master? There must be something more manageable, something that can speak to intellect as it grows, that can touch feeling, that can curb passion, that can minister a present reward to benevolence, to piety and tenderness of heart. Would that jurisconsult, to whom we have alluded, begin at that time to use calculations of ultimate utility to one whose hopes and fears do not range much further than to-morrow or the present day?

Now the christian code sketched above is suited to this case precisely. It addresses itself to states of feeling, and directs the mind inward to observe them. It points the conscience to them the moment they rise, and therefore suits with earliest life, which cares for little but the present. It makes us familiar with the fountains of evil within, whence issue the great streams of wickedness. It is a grammar of conduct; the *ideal* of perfection; which being contemplated from the earliest age, will bring one familiar with the knowledge of good and ill in every relation of human life; and, if practised from earliest age, will induce an indelible approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other. Whereas if, without such discipline and such application of the great maxims of purity and justice, you allow youth to grow at random, it will turn out as difficult to bring it under the regulation of the positive laws of society, as it would be to introduce at once into the equestrian's exercise of the circus, the wild horse of the

Arabian desert, which snuffeth up the wind in the pride of its boundless freedom.

Next, as to their sublime and inaccessible reach of virtue, I hold this to be one of the chief points in which the adaptation of the divine laws to human nature is revealed. Yes, paradoxical as it may seem, their application to human nature is in nothing more revealed than in their celestial and ideal perfection. For it is the nature of man, especially of youth, which determineth the cast of future manhood, to place before him the highest patterns in that kind of excellence at which he aimeth. Human nature thirsteth for the highest and the best, not the most easily attained. The faculty of hope is ever conjuring into being some bright estate, far surpassing present possession—the faculty of fancy ever wingeth aloft into regions of ethereal beauty and romantic fiction, far beyond the boundaries of truth. There is a refined nature in man, which the world satisfieth not: it calls for poetry, to mix up happier combinations for its use—it magnifies, it beautifies, it sublimes every form of creation, and every condition of existence. Oh, heavens! how the soul of man is restless and unbound—how it lusteth after greatness—how it revolveth around the sphere of perfection, but cannot enter in—how it compasseth round the seraph-guarded verge of Eden, but cannot enter in. That wo-begone and self-tormented, wretched man, our poet, hath so feigned it of Cain; but it is not a wicked murderer's part thus upwards to soar, and sigh that he can go no higher: it is the part of every noble faculty of the soul, which God

hath endowed with purity and strength above its peers. For the world is but an average product of the minds that make it up; its laws are for all those that dwell therein, not for the gifted few; its customs are covenants for the use of the many; and when it pleaseth God to create a master spirit in any kind, a Bacon in philosophy, a Shakspeare in fancy, a Milton in poetry, a Newton in science, a Locke in sincerity and truth—they must either address their wondrous faculties to elevate that average which they find established, and so bless the generations that are to come; or, like that much-to-be-pitied master of present poetry, and many other mighty spirits of this licentious day, they must rage and fret against the world; which world will dash them off, as the prominent rocks do the feeble bark which braves them, leaving them to after ages monuments of reckless folly. That same world will dash them off, which, if they had come with honest, kind intentions, would have taken them into its bosom even as other rocks of the ocean do throw their everlasting arms abroad, and take within their peaceful bays thousands of the tallest ships which sail upon the bosom of the deep. It is, I say, the nature of every faculty of the mind created greater than ordinary, to dress out a feast for that same faculty in other men, to lift up the limits of enjoyment in that direction, and plant them a little onward into the regions of unreclaimed thought. And so it came to pass, that God, who possesseth every faculty in perfection, when he put his hand to the work, brought forth this perfect institution of moral

conduct, in order to perfect as far as could be the moral condition and consequent enjoyment of man.

Let the mind, from its first dawning, be fed on matters of fact alone, limited to the desire of the needful, and to the hope of the attainable, never imaginative, never speculative; it will become as the physical condition of those people who are living upon the very edge of necessity becomes, little elevated above the brutes that perish. It is illimitable knowledge still sought after, though unbounded; it is high ambition still longed after, though never reached; and soaring fancy, dwelling with things unseen, that go to produce the noble specimen of the natural man. And it is the very same faculties employed upon things revealed that go to produce the foremost specimen of the renewed man. David, and Paul, and Isaiah (such three pillars of the church of the living God are not to be named), how noble how heroical, how majestical were they! I am well and painfully aware, that the unwise and excessive culture of these faculties, when divorced from nature instead of resting on nature, when misinterpreting revelation instead of believing revelation, will produce the sentimental enthusiast in nature and the fanatic in religion. But, being rested on nature and experience, such discursive ranges beyond things presently practicable, such longings after these ultimate powers and attainments of manhood, are necessary, in order that the mind may grow to stature and strength in any department.

It is the best prognostick of a youth to be

found so occupying himself with thoughts beyond his present power and above his present place. The young aspirant after military renown reads the campaigns of the greatest conquerors the world hath produced. The patriot hath Hampden and Russell and Sydney ever in his eye. The poet consumes the silent hours of night over the works of masters in every tongue, though himself hath hardly turned a rhyme. The noble-minded churchman (of whom alas! there are but few) doats on the Hookers and the Gilpins and the Knoxes of past times. And the stern unyielding non-conformist talks to you of Luther and Baxter, and the two thousand self-devoted priests: (proud days these for England!) And the artist fills his study with casts from the antique, and drains both health and means to their very dregs in pilgrimages to the shrined pictures of the masters.

And in *moral purity* alone shall we be condemned to drudge at every day's performance. In the noblest of all the walks of men, generosity; forgiveness, vestal chastity, matrimonial fidelity, incorrupt truthfulness and faith, shall we have no tablets of perfection to hang before the people, out of which they may form their idea of a perfect undefiled man; and after which they may be constantly upon the stretch? Here alone shall we have no room for desire to range beyond present attainment, no hope to embody in the distant future—nothing to sigh after, or pray for—nothing to contemplate, but the bloated pictures of life, the dwarfish specimens of character we

behold around us? This were most fatal to those departments of excellence, upon which the happiness of man turns more than upon all the rest! But it is such a state of things as never can exist. Here also the human mind would have displayed her plastic powers, and created specimens far above the demands of law or the customary measures of life. If God had not interfered, man would himself have asserted his own superiority to drudging daily rules, and struck out examples worthy to be imitated, and glorious to be surpassed. And these would have become the models after which to rear the youth covetous of moral grandeur. But God, pitying the small success which human nature had in producing such specimens of moral excellence; and perceiving how men were lost for want of these high examples and perfect rules which they enjoyed in other departments, gave forth His tablets of practical holiness; which are not surely the worse that they have come from the bosom of God, and are plainly written in brief compass, than that they should have dropped from the fallible wit of man, and been scattered piecemeal over the writings of different ages and of distant lands. Then, because man loveth not only the precept but the example, and kindleth into love and emulation, and other ardent sympathies, when he beholds that thing exemplified which he himself would wish to be, God hath also given Christ in whom these perfections are concentrated, and from whose history we can study these beauties in

example and in life. And thus, with book in hand, and model under our eye, we can study the perfection of the mind and life of man, as the artist, with descriptions in his hand and the models before his eye, studies the exact proportion, and accustoms his eye to the beauties of external form.

These divine laws, which are fitted by their simplicity for being ingrafted upon the very first rudiments of our being; and by their elevated purity to excite an enthusiasm after moral excellence in the mind of youth, are moreover absolutely necessary to form a basis upon which every other species of obligation, private or public, may rest. Obligations of law, as hath been said, have or ought to have their basis in the mutual interest which they are made to secure, and their sanction is the deprivation of our share in that mutual good, with reparation of the loss that we have occasioned, and submission to be watched until we are worthy of renewed confidence. Now, will any man say that a regard to interest, a fear of loss, the sense of being looked after and watched, (which are the principles that statute law calleth into play,) that these are able to work out the good citizen, or the good member of a family, or the good friend? It is very fortunate that the idea of being under statute law comes so seldom over the mind, and the sight of a watchful guardian of law comes so seldom before the eye; otherwise we should become timorous and cunning like the subjects of other realms, whose mind and sight are so invaded. It is fortunate that the sense of our interest is

often met by other sentiments of charity, kindness, and generosity, otherwise we should become like pedlar-merchants, or bargain-hunting Jews, in whose thoughts interest is always uppermost. Now, I ask the jurisconsults, if a law was ever made to uphold charity, or compassion; to enforce generosity, affection, or other noble sentiments? Law has nothing to do with these. What is it then that hath to do with them? The mind itself: the mind's regard for its own well-being. Now, how are these to be cultivated? Not by law we see. By what then? By the discipline of the inward man. It must be something that withdraws the mind from the sense of another's observation, to the sense of its own dignity; something which habituates it to the examination of itself. To this end a guide is needed to distinguish the good from the evil, which will address itself at once to consciousness, saying,—How feelest thou? How thinkest thou? How dost thou stand affected?—and as promptly replying, Thou art right, or Thou art wrong.

Such a guide is the law above delineated,—teaching equity, chastity, forgiveness, fidelity, modesty; encouraging to whatsoever things are pure, honest, lovely, and of good report; cultivating the affections, approving and reproving every good and evil temper of the mind. It is as broad as human life, and furnisheth for every station and relation of life. It lays the basis of noble character, and the principles of enlightened obedience; it keeps every good sentiment upon the

field, every bad one under cover. The mind which submits to its cultivation, becomes acquainted with its own good and evil parts; and by seeing the one always in the light of God's favour, the other in the darkness of his frown, approbation of the good comes to be engendered, with disapprobation of the evil; habits of well-doing to grow, and habits of evil-doing to decay. Thus you raise up in the bosom of nature a monitor of good, whose ear you can address on all future occasions. To this better man within the breast, who hath been brought to life, and fostered by celestial food, the father, the friend, the master, the country, make their future appeal for fidelity and duty; and they find him to be a strong hold against selfishness and violence and lust. But if this advocate of the honourable, the dutiful, and the just, have been left alone without counsel or guidance, he falls under the domination of sensual and selfish lusts. The enemy within the breast gets the upper hand of the little state, and the father, the friend, the master, the country, have to dethrone him; and thereafter to attempt the resurrection of their ally, whom they will find dispirited, perhaps annihilated, through long oppression.

In proof of this, attend to the difference between those who are educated under the sanction of the eye of conscience, and those who are educated under the sanction of the eye of man; and still more those who are educated under the sanction of the eye of law. The schools of thieves and sharpers and knaves of every kind, are the only

instances I can think of people being trained under the sanction of the eye of law; and see how little it tends to reform them. According as you penetrate into the sphere of fashion, you come more and more under the sanction of the eye of man. And the tendency of this immersion, every body knows, is to corrupt sound and honest feeling, to bring on affectation and disguise, to empty the heart and make it hollow. According as you escape from this orb into the sphere of quiet, domestic life, and approach towards religious life, you come more and more under the sanction of the eye of conscience; and from these regions it is acknowledged that society receives her true sustenance and ornament. Not but the eye both of law and mankind may be excellent guardians of character, when they look severely (as they do generally) upon wickedness, but that it is a slavery and degradation to the mind to be under any kind of inquisition or surveillance. It is hateful to be watched, to be hunted out of what is bad, and to be baited to what is good, though it were by the tenderest of all authorities, that of a parent. For even in family regimen it is easy to remark the difference between the children who have been wrought upon by persuasion and conviction, and those who have been compelled by dictation and force. The mind abhors that its convictions should be intermeddled with, save by endeavours to convince. It delights in one who leads it by the light of knowledge out of all errors; it hates one who, by any other instrument, attempts the same office.

To these instincts of nature Christ's laws apply most sweetly, bringing in no lordly authority, but operating by means of affection and improvement and hope of eternal gain. With these instruments they apply to conscience or self-judgment alone, setting on no watchman of any kind, except the observation of God, who loveth good and hateth evil; who promoteth happiness, and striveth that unhappiness may cease. They make the mind the mistress of herself; they place her own judgment of herself above the world's—second only to God's; they take her into contract with God, no third party being conscious. She rejoiceth in a liberty of her own, inward and unseen. She contemplateth her own growing beauty in the mirror of the divine law, and becomes enamoured of herself—to which the flattery of royal persons is as nothing. Her outward actions are like the motions of her limbs, obedient to an inward willingness, by no outward force constrained. The law of men is under her feet; she sits arbitress over all, obeying or disobeying higher councils. Such intrepid, heaven-guided spirits give the tone to law, when they are in sufficient numbers, in any state. No interest will tempt them to obey the evil, no bribe to forego the good; they submit to the spoiling of their goods, to the deprivation of freedom, to the loss of life, rather than give up any attribute of this divine liberty. This is dangerous for laws which do not keep to God's counsels, but auspicious for laws that do; and hence it hath come to pass, that, in those lands where Christians have made head, they have turned towards their own course the stubborn

courses both of law and manners. In this land, for example, they have disarmed the thigh of its weapon, and procured revenge to be taken out of the hands of the injured into the hands of the upright judge;—they have made reformation to be acknowledged as the main object of punishment;—they have abolished the divine right of kings to have their will out of subjects;—they have almost got adultery to be acknowledged as the only righteous cause of divorce;—they have made the accommodation of others to be sanctioned as the basis of politeness;—the spirit of government they have forced, by sundry desperate efforts, to become equitable, open, and disclosed, instead of being, as in the Italian and other continental states, crooked and intriguing.—From all which it is manifest, that, in the force of heaven-directed will, there is a staunchness, an intrepidity, and a long-suffering, which brings out equity triumphant against injustice, and liberty against wilfulness, forming a wall of shields around whatever is good in human laws,—smiting, as with a constant battering-ram, against every thing which is evil.

Much more might be said in praise of the spirit of the Christian code, were there not before us a question of far greater moment which requires to be resolved, before we can proceed to the judgment which God is to take of its fulfilment. If judgment is to proceed upon the letter of the laws recounted above, then the world as one man must plead guilty before Him. For however these laws commend themselves to justice and goodness and

truth, and with whatever sincerity we may adopt them for our rule, we cannot succeed in keeping them, but do daily break them in thought, word, and deed. How many malicious sentiments do we entertain! How many actions of our enemies do we not forgive! How many quarrels and feuds do we cherish! How many wanton thoughts pass through and find harbour in our minds! How many of our affections doat on worldly objects! How much passion, how much insincerity, how much censure, how much hypocrisy, how much revenge! How many of our good actions are done to be seen of men, thought upon with self-complacency, and talked over with vain delight! How consequential we become when we get wealth, how imperious when we get power, how self-conceited when we get distinction! How covetous before we reach the desired haven, how envious and inimical to those who already hold it! These classes of feelings, which are all dear to nature, are directly opposed to the laws of Christ; and if his judgment be like other judgments, they must every one be proceeded against. And yet the observation of life, and the consciousness of his own breast, must convince every man that not upon one of these counts, but upon every one, the whole world is guilty.

And if any one refuse this appeal which we make to his conscience, and hesitate upon pleading guilty to the several indictments recounted above, it must be under the influence of some blindness, which we would remove by lifting up the veils of self-esteem

and self-interest, which hinder him from seeing into the interior of his breast. We would lie in wait to hear him descant upon the failings of his neighbour—What a range of vision he then takes in, and how keenly he discriminates every feature of the scene; not only condescending upon the wrong without hesitation, but even from appearance anticipating and calculating with most refined skill! His moral tact is nicer than the rules of the exactest moralist—A word, a look, an attitude, a gesture, opens day-light into the recesses of the soul. Now the man who can thus discriminate and denominate to the nicest shade of moral turpitude, and who adventures with such alacrity and self-sufficiency to the work of moral criticism upon the moral characters around him, is no novice in these matters; and if, when doing the same office upon himself, he should seem little inquisitive and little observant, and very merciful, we will ask him whither his discriminative faculties are flown, and where he hath mislaid his moral gage, and require him to show cause why he should not be measured by the standard of his own choice and application, brought to his own bar, held over to his own judgment, and adjudged according to the spirit of his own decisions. Thus we lift up the veil of a man's self-esteem, and discover to him a world of faults and failings discernible by his conscience in another, which he hath bribed his conscience from discerning in himself.

But some one may plead off from this capacity of discerning failings in his neighbour, and deny such

power of conscience to perceive his own offendings as we have asserted to be in every man. Then with such a one we would make a tour of observation upon human life, and in our turns to and fro we would remark to him what caution and address men display in their intercourse among themselves. How slowly they unfold their mind, how they choose the most indifferent topics of discourse, and have a common-place phraseology upon those which lie nearer their heart. How, when they come to trade and barter, they approach, and recede, and affect indifference. How prudent is their first acquaintance, and how few of their acquaintances ripen into confidence, and how much mutual proof before that confidence is matured. How every one is calculating upon much being behind the stage-curtain of his neighbour, and keeping much behind the stage-curtain of himself; and how when they do raise the curtain and take their parts, these are not real characters which they personate; and, you would not be further out in the theatre to drop the knee before him who seems a king, sit at the feet of him who seems a philosopher, or band with him who seems a patriot, than in the world you would be out in clasping to your bosom every one who professes friendship, or committing your all to him who protests honesty, or opening your heart to him who is all faithfulness and truth. Then I would twitch the sleeve of my companion, and ask, "What say you to all this?" He would answer, 'That is all as it should be; these are

knowing ones, that is human life, and the invaluable knowledge of mankind.' "So," I would reply, "you are acquainted with all this." 'Acquainted with it,' he would say; 'do you think I am a novice or a fool, or what do you take me for?' "Then you have played your part in that game?" 'Sure; what else have I been doing since I began life for myself. If I had not been as dexterous as the rest, they would soon have plucked me.' Now then I would reply, though it be rather unhandsome to condemn you out of your own mouth, yet as it is for your own good, you will excuse my saying that you have confessed that your conscience perceives a deal of things which you not only hide in your conduct, but make a merit of hiding. Your deed, your word belies your thought—you make believe—you save appearances—you seem to be what you are not—you would not be that which you seem.

If any man be self-blinded, we would by such means disabuse him, and if he be obstinate, overcome him, to confess himself an enormous transgressor when measured by the laws of Christ, which reach to every secret thought, and will have nothing but the purest in every kind. But perhaps a better way than either of the above, for operating conviction, will be to lift up the veil of ignorance which hangs upon our minds, as to what God really requires of us in our several places and relations: which being rightly perceived will not only silence further parley upon our guilt, but also show the hopelessness of ever

working out acquittance, and prepare the mind to look for and receive some other revelation, which may make this constitution of law, so excellent in itself, and so favourable to all kind of moral improvement in this world, likewise, as it respects future judgment, tolerable for mankind to live under, hopeful to the mind conscious of its own guiltiness, and practicable for God to acquit upon, without dishonouring his statutes and dissolving our responsibility.

In the analysis of the divine law with which we commenced this discourse, we have lifted up this veil of ignorance in so far as it hung over the mind and will of God; and in now removing it from the fields of active duty upon which God would have us to exhibit our obedience, we enter upon a sea or ocean of discourse in which we might expatiate for ever without finding any shore. Therefore it becomes expedient for the end in view, that we single out some specific department of human agency within which to confine ourselves. Take then the use of the fortune which God hath put into our hands. This it is generally understood is a man's own to do his pleasure, without interference of any foreign authority. It is our own, hard-earned, and surely with our own we may do our will. No, saith God, it is a gift from me, which I could have sent to your serving-man, or to the beggar at your gate. You hold it of me, and for high purposes, which I warn you of, and will look into when I call from every man an account of his steward-

ship. No law of the land can hinder one from hoarding his wealth and glutting his eyes with it night and morning, meditating of it by day and dreaming of it by night. No law can hinder him from scattering it to a scrambling mob, or drowning it in the depths of the sea, or burying it in the bowels of the earth. He might bribe honest men with it, and seduce modest women, and play the rake upon the largest, broadest scale. Such is the limitation of human law, that it could not touch him within this wide sphere of wickedness. Such is the easiness of public opinion and fashionable society, that he could bribe the one to be silent with a few acts of generosity, the other with a gay equipage and a courteous address. These several courses, and many more into which men direct their fortune, all unconscious of any faults,—as to indulge vanity, or foster pride, or pamper appetite, or gratify passion, or outpeer a rival, or humble an enemy, or nourish self-sufficiency and independence upon the providence of God,—all these, which the poor timorous eye of law beholds, but dares not challenge however it disapproves, the law of God takes up as with a touchstone, tries and condemns, and commands us to use our fortune for the sake of good,—to preserve the health of our body, and the equanimity of our mind, to procure power for the purpose of being useful, to educate our families in knowledge and wisdom, and to establish them in the most influential places, that they also may be serviceable in the highest degree to that which

is good;—at the same time, not afterwards, to supply want and succour misery, to patronize merit and uphold praiseworthy people all over the sphere of our influence;—and, while remembering in our charity the worldly state, not to forget the religious state, but to bear up the pillars thereof, seeking out the persecuted members of Christ to protect and establish them, spreading the gospel to those who know it not, and turning our means into all directions where there is any virtue, and where there is any praise. So much for the stewardship of fortune, which is but one talent, and perhaps the coarsest, cheapest talent of the whole. There is the stewardship of power derived from station and place, and the stewardship of knowledge, a most divine talent, and of affection, and of speech, the talent most constantly in demand, and of thought, of which speech is but the current coinage, and of time so uncertain, and of a thousand others, of all which time would fail us to speak.

Now, if we engage in this sea of divine cares, endeavouring to do our utmost, then do we find this remarkable result, that our mind grows nicer and nicer in its discernment, our perceptions more delicate, and our views of duty more enlarged. We are like travellers in a mountainous country; if we stand in the valley, mountains surround us; if we ascend these mountains, it is but a wider view of mountains to be surpassed.—But the traveller at length, by perseverance, arrives at the peaceful valley, where he may rest from his labours and talk over the hardships which he hath

passed. Whereas this task grows incessantly during the whole of life; as we extinguish it at one end, it grows more perseveringly and more rapidly at the other. It is, in no figurative but in a true sense, a Herculean labour; for while you strike off one head, two others spring up in its stead. Every one will discover by experience, when he sets his shoulders to the mighty work of keeping the law of God, that what he succeeds in is but a scantling of what he fails in. In the obedience of every other law we may be guiltless. We may pass the bounds of duty and become meritorious and honorary members of the family of the social circle, or of the state; but we are our own accusers before the law of God, and the better we become, the more violently we accuse ourselves; which is a phenomenon the inexperienced can by no means understand. David well expressed this truth when he said it was light to the eyes;—for as light openeth to the eye the wonderful works of God, which without it seemed one pall of darkness, so the law openeth to the conscience the multitude of duties, of which formerly it discerned neither the boundless compass nor the infinite number; so that, in the language of St. Paul, by the law is the knowledge of sin. Many men have discoursed eloquently of the nice tact which conscience arrives at by reason of use; but beyond all eloquent attestations is the fact, that the men most faithfully and diligently, and, to all appearance, most successfully employed in the fulfilment of the law, are the men who most distinctly perceive and most loudly lament their short-

comings. I need not quote Paul's heavy accusation of himself, in the viith of the Romans, because it is well known; but I cannot forbear a quotation from the writings of one who was a pattern of holiness—the judicious Hooker—who thus expresseth himself in his discourse of Justification: "There is no man's case so dangerous as his whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God. If we could say we were not guilty of any thing at all in our consciences, (we know ourselves far from this innocency; we cannot say we know nothing by ourselves but if we could) should we therefore plead not guilty before the presence of our Judge that sees farther into our hearts than we ourselves can do? If our hands did never offer violence to our brother, a bloody thought doth prove us murderers before him. If we had never offered to open our mouth to utter any scandalous, offensive, or hurtful word, the cry of our secret cogitations is heard in the ears of God. If we did not commit the sins which daily and hourly, either in deed, word, or thought, we do commit, yet in the good things which we do how many defects are there intermingled! God, in that which is done, respecteth the mind and the intention of the doer. Cut off, then, all those things wherein we have regarded our own glory, those things which men do to please men, and satisfy our own liking, those things which we do for any by-respect, not sincerely and purely for the love of God, and a small score will serve for the number of our righteous deeds. Let the holiest and

best things which we do be considered.—We are never better affected unto God than when we pray; yet when we pray how are our affections many times distracted! how little reverence do we show unto the grand majesty of God, unto whom we speak! how little remorse of our own miseries! how little taste of the sweet influence of his tender mercies do we feel! Are we not, as unwilling many times to begin and as glad to make an end, as if, in saying, Call upon me, he had set us a very burdensome task. It may seem somewhat extreme which I will speak; therefore let every one judge of it, even as his own heart shall tell him and no otherwise.—I will but only make a demand: If God should yield unto us, not as unto Abraham, if fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes the city should not be destroyed—but if he should make his offer thus large—search all the generations of men sithence the fall of our father Adam, find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all, and for that one action neither man nor angel shall feel the torments which were prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men?"

The same sense of utter deficiency, which is expressed in the above passage with such a compass of thought and language, is experienced by every one who examines his life by the law of God. Much he will see that he has never attempted, and in every thing that he has attempted,

much that he has never performed; and in what he has performed, much that is sinful and blameworthy; and the more he is at pains to scan the mighty labour, the more will the mighty labour swell in his eye, and the more of it will he behold unperformed. In the progress even of his improvement, he rolls along with him an accumulating load of omissions and transgressions, which, had there been no provision made for it, would have overwhelmed his mind, and soon brought all obedience to a stand.

No enthusiasm could have borne up against the hopelessness and terrors of such a law; no spirit could have brooked to be ground down with a task, which by its very nature was interminable and thankless in every stage of its progress,—where diligence did not satisfy our task-master, and patient endurance of the unmeasured toil did but find for us threats in this life and scourgings in the life to come. And if we did persevere, it would have been to decry the injustice of proceeding against us. For our advancement in what was good would have begotten a sense of worth, a pride of improvement, and a satisfaction with ourselves, which would have made us recede from the indignity of being threatened with the visitation of divine wrath for that which neither we nor any man, by any means, could better perform; which burst of feeling would avail us little—for alas! the remembrance lying heavy upon our conscience of having often fallen asleep in the midst of duties, and allowed ourselves with our eyes open, to give way before the dalliance and enjoyment

and vanities of the world; the consciousness of having often yielded, in the face of our better resolutions, to the insurrection of nature within; the long period of youth, and perhaps prime of manhood, spent in rushing at the command of natural instinct into forbidden wickedness;—all these evils, past, present, and to come, Memory loaded with the unprofitable past, Hope having fearful anticipation of the coming future, the present occupied with interminable duty, would, together, have combined a state of mind the most unfit for any useful employment of our faculties. Joy and happiness, which form the atmosphere of alacrity and activity, would have been sealed up, and a drooping speechless drudgery, driven on by a kind of fear; the desire that things might not grow worse, no hope of ever retrieving them, would have been the only motive to carry us forward. Between attempting and failing, between reflections upon ourselves and reflections upon God, our life would have passed unprofitably if this law, so enlarged and pure, was to have a strict inquisition at a future judgment.

It remains therefore, that we complete this exposition of the constitution under which God hath placed us, by entering into an explanation of the various provisions which are contained in it for meeting this dilemma, into which every man is brought, however sincere be his intention, and however great his endeavours to keep the perfect law of God. But this is of so much importance, and so distinct, that we separate it along with the other provisions of the divine constitution for the next part of our argument.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART III.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In order to meet that sense of delinquency with which every reflective mind is oppressed when it betakes itself to stand or fall by the law of God, many devices are imagined, whereof we shall examine the stability before unfolding that which the Lawgiver hath himself discovered. For there is a strange perverseness in mankind to do without this other part of the divine constitution, and by their own inventions to help themselves out of the dilemma into which they are brought by the purity of the law; on which account it becomes necessary to pause, and consider these suggestions of natural reason, before proceeding to develop what God himself hath revealed upon the subject.

The most common refuge of the mind from its consciousness of guilt is in the mercy of God. His toleration of sin here, and his goodness to the sinner, insinuate into the mind the idea that he may be as forgiving and kind in the world to come. This hope, or rather hallucination, for it does not reach to the decision of a hope, serves with many to compose whatever thought or anxiety they feel upon the subject of future judgment. It is a notion of such flimsy texture as hardly to

bear examination, and would not be worthy of notice in this place, were it not for the numbers who are content to be thereby deluded. For it is manifest, that if God is thus to pass all without examination upon the impulse of his mercy, he might have spared himself the trouble of making a law. The law is a dead letter if it is not to be proceeded upon; nay, it is a deception, inasmuch as it inflicts many needless fears, and requires many useless sacrifices. Not that we would annihilate his power of remission, which we shall see is very great, but that however great, it cannot extend over every form of delinquency without extinguishing all difference of character, and making the divine government one great system of passing and patronizing every form of crime. His mercy, however great, must proceed by rule, otherwise it will destroy responsibility, annihilate judgment, and upset righteousness and bring us into the same condition as if he had never interfered in our affairs. Being driven out of this shift, men betake themselves to make a rough estimation of the good and ill of their character, and see how they stand by others, taking heart if they are above par; and, if below it, balancing against their fears some charities or religious formalities, or better intentions for the future. Men of business build upon their honesty, men of rank upon their honour, simple men upon their good nature, dissipated men upon a good heart at bottom, all upon their clearness from great crime and excessive wickedness. Now

this is all at random; it is to conjecture, not to think; to fancy a God and invent a law, and to abandon those which are revealed. For honesty, and honour, and good-nature, and a good heart, (as they call it,) are rules by which men regulated themselves before God took the reins, and if they could have answered the end in view, it would have been idle in him to have added any thing beyond. But now that he has taken the management, and issued laws by which he commandeth us to abide, he will surely look to their obedience—or what was the use of uttering them? And any claim we rest, of escaping, must derive itself in some way from our obedience of these statutes, otherwise the statues go for nothing, and God is content to be dishonoured, and to leave us as he found us, having totally failed in his undertaking to ameliorate our condition.

The next suggestion of the mind is, "That if we make a sincere endeavour to do our best in keeping the divine laws, it is enough; God will, in his mercy, pardon our short-coming." This is, to meet the difficulty in the face, and therefore it is worthy of examination. That God will require of any one more than the best, or that he will ask something beyond what it is possible to do, is unreasonable in the last degree. But who is the man that can say he has done his best? or that he has endeavoured to do his best? Were there such a man, he would have no self-accusations, no upbraidings of conscience, no remembrance of iniquity past, and no uneasiness from

present imperfection. If any one be so opinioned, to be undeceived, he has only to ask his neighbour, or his bosom companion, or his enemy, or any other mortal than himself. Ignorance indeed of what duty consists in may work this delusion, which self-esteem will hardly work. But our inquiry doth not admit the apology of ignorance, being not what an ignorant man feels, but what a man, informed by the divine law, and bringing to the bar of that law his thoughts and words and deeds—what such an one feels. And surely, as hath been shown above, no one will allow but that he understands more of that law than he hath performed, and that there is much of it which he hath not taken pains to understand. That hours and days and weeks and months and years have passed at one time or other of his life, in which he did not think of God's law, much less endeavour to keep it—much less endeavour his best to keep it. Then if no one can say he hath done his best to keep it, this quietus to conscience leaves us where it found us. No one can claim upon it for an arrest of judgment.

But there is a great tendency in men to indulge the idea that they are doing the best under all the circumstances of their case; and that God who sends them their severe trials, their strong passions, and their imperfect nature, will surely take all these things into account. That he doth take them into account will be seen hereafter; but he doth not permit us to take the account of them. There is the greatest difference between the Judge deciding

upon the equity of the case, and the party deciding for himself. I suppose you would not get a verdict in any of the criminal courts if you were to allow the prisoner to plead upon his having done his best to avoid the crime. Not but that it is a good plea if it could be ascertained, but that he is not the judge of the plea. The law presumes that he has power to keep its requirements, and though there be special circumstances of hardship in the case, still the law is relentless, and the royal prerogative of mercy is the only refuge. There is too much tendency in nature to exculpate herself, that she should need aiding and abetting from law, of which the very office is to correct this her weakness, and to place another's interest under protection from our own. But it were at once to loose every restraint of law, and give selfishness and prejudice and power their fullest swing, were men to be indulged with hope of acquittal upon their declaring that they had done their best. Most slily would nature insinuate her weakness, most powerfully would she exaggerate the temptation, most cunningly shift the blame from herself, and most boldly in the end face it out, by saying, It could not be helped, I did my best. The thief would say, "What could I do to get my bread, I was honest once, but the world set against me; long I strove with misfortune, but nature being weak and necessity strong, I could resist no longer. All that could be done I did; it was the last resource, therefore I am clear, having done my best." The idle vagabond would say, "What

can I do, I crave to know, more than I have done? My parents have cast me off, my master, the world; I am despised and rejected of men; they make me a vagabond, not I myself. Give me an honest profession and I will work at it; but till then what can I do but seek how and where I may find?" Such would be the effect of acquitting upon the plea, having endeavoured the best; it would reach far and wide toleration to every crime, bring down the unalterable law to every man's ideal, ignorant, prejudiced standard, and leave to his own decision whether he hath come up to that standard or no. He is law, he is judge, he is every thing. All authority over him is at an end, so that we are again where we were without any use or advantage from God's law, if this method of evading it is to be sustained.

All these subterfuges (for they deserve no better name) are manifest to any one who thinks for a moment of the nature of law; which is useful only as it is stable, and which is perfect when it is inflexible. If law bends to one, why not to another? If it yields to one specialty, why not yield to another? And so it would grow to be as weak as human nature, whose weakness it is designed to protect. It is to cheat me of my liberty, not to defend me in my rights, to promulgate a scheme of law, and allow it to be departed from. It is to cheat the good for the sake of indulging the bad. It is to relax all the covenants of which society consists, and leave men so much as you relax to their native liberty, which liberty law may go too

far in restraining, but, having once restrained, ought equally to restrain in all. In our civil institutions this is so well understood, that rather than permit the judge of law to relax or bend it to any unforeseen case of hardship which may occur, we set up another court of equity, before which such cases may be entered—but if once they come into a court of law, the issue of law must stand, unless you apply to the royal fountain of mercy.

It is fortunate that we can appeal to a historical fact which demonstrates upon the large scale the truth of all the above reasoning, and shows how fatal it is to promulgate one rule to the people, and proceed to judgment by another. Draco, the legislator of Athens, was a man of a sense of equity almost divine, which won for him such admiration, that he died a martyr to its excess. This man was pitched upon by his fellow-citizens to furnish them with a code of laws. These he constructed rather after his own high sentiments than for their imperfections; making almost every crime punishable with death—idleness having the same punishment as murder—which caused it to be said that Draco's laws were written with blood. When these laws came to be executed, the judge found that it was not in the heart of man to inflict punishment by the letter; they gradually relaxed them, silently apportioning the punishment to the measure of the delinquency. This could not pass unobserved; the people began to calculate on it, and to pass beyond it in

their calculations. In a short time the laws (though from any account we have of them, and from the hallowed estimation of their author, they were of the purest, justest, wisest character,) soon fell into contempt and were trampled under foot, merely because they misgave in the execution, though up to that point they were blameless.

That the same effect with regard to the laws of God will follow the notion that they are to be reduced in the judgment, and that none of their excellent qualities set forth in the former discourse will bear them up against such a loss of authority, we not only have no doubt, but we have the clearest manifestation of the fact to offer. Wherever the doctrine is taught that God will swerve from his threatened punishment, and in the end bring all men out of thraldom—as it is in unitarian pulpits; wherever the doctrine is taught that God will lower his demand to our performance, and take what we have to give, passing by the rest—as it is in the pulpits of our fashionable and accommodating divines; then mark the effect upon the hearers. They fall away from the constant sense of God's authority, they fall away from the spiritual interpretation of his laws, they come to hold religion as a regular, formal thing done at stated times, and to stand by their honesty, their honour, their goodness of heart, their charities, or some other criterion which exists in human nature or civilized society quite independent on God's right to interfere, or his actual interference in our affairs. Such preachers never get a purchase

upon their people to lift them out of the resting-places where they found them. They swear by their honour still, they build upon their honesty, and decency, and respectable character, as they were wont to do. They are in soul the same as before they heard of God's law, with this difference, that they follow religious customs instead of irreligious customs; and so in France they would follow French customs; in the city, city customs; and in the country, country customs.

The law, therefore, must stand wholly, or it must fall wholly; such is the nature of all legal institutions. Yet man cannot keep it wholly. How, then is man to escape? Here we find ourselves again at a stand, from which I challenge human reason to deliver us, or afford us the shadow of a shelter. If God had not written out a law, sustaining our own conscience of good and evil, in all its purest judgments, and passing clean beyond into a region of superhuman, unclouded, celestial purity, there would have been a way of escape. You might have alleged against conscience what has been alleged by the jurisconsult, [noticed in the preceding discourse,] that it was a varying faculty in various minds, and not to be accounted of as a standard of the right and wrong. And there I think that jurisconsult is right, as he is also in seeking for something tangible which may be submitted to calculation by the lawgiver, and expounded in the shape of statute, not left in the fluctuating uncertainty of private feeling. Which seeing that God hath done giving us fixed and formal statutes upon (I will not

say) calculations of utility, but most certainly issuing therein, there is no eluding or shunning of them; they must stand altogether, or altogether fall—they must be rejected altogether, or altogether be adopted.

If Christ had done no more than promulgate the code detailed above, then at this point I should have shut up this argument of Judgment to come, as not being able to make out of it any thing but universal condemnation to man, even though he should have done his best. I should have advised to preserve it for its good qualities in sustaining all the wholesome sentiments of the heart, and all the advantageous relationships of life,—but as an instrument to judge upon I should have been altogether dumb in its defence. But to his immortal praise, and our unspeakable deliverance from threatening judgment, He added to this constitution a second part, which removes this barrier impassable by human reason, and lifts us into new capacities of obedience. This second part of his constitution we are now to unfold.

Here we have to introduce an idea, which will be new, and therefore may sound strange to such of our readers as are unacquainted with the Gospel of Christ; but we beg of them not to break off, but to hear us to an end; for we must proceed according to the rule which we laid down for the conducting of our argument, gathering the matters of fact out of the revelation, and showing that the whole is conducive to every good and noble and gainful end.

Next to the existence of God, the truth most frequently revealed in Scripture, is that Christ is a Saviour from sins. Whether you take the prophets who spake of him before, or the apostles who spake of him after his coming, or his own account of himself, they are harmonious upon this point,—that the great object of his coming was to save men from the consequence of transgressions. Isaiah hath it so written in many places, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." Jeremiah, describing the æra of his coming, or as he calls it, of the New Covenant, puts these words into the mouth of God, "I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more." So also Ezekiel, when speaking of the same event. Daniel describes Messiah the prince as coming to "finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness." So also it is written in Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi. When he was announced by the angel to Joseph, it was in these words, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." At his birth, the angels rejoiced over him as a "Saviour." Zacharias sung of him as a "Redeemer." Simeon hailed him as "Salvation arrived to all people." John the Baptist announced him as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." He announced himself as such in almost every miracle, saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He put his miracles forth as evidence of the same,

"That ye may know the Son of man hath power to forgive sins." The last act of his life was "the forgiveness of sins." Peter first preached him to the Jews "as justifying them from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses;" to the Gentiles as being the Son of God, "through faith, in whose name there is remission of sins." Paul gave no other name to the jailor of Philippi for forgiveness of sins but Christ's, and declares there is no other given under heaven. In short, it is in all their writings, like the sun in the firmament of heaven; and how men can miss finding it, or not rejoice over it when it is found, is a miracle of blindness and want of feeling, to be accounted for only by their being shut up in some of those mistakes and prejudices about the nature of law, and its powers of yielding, which we have exposed above.

It doth appear therefore, that we were not wrong in our argumentation, and that mankind are to a man brought, by the nature of God's government, into that dilemma of sinfulness and wrath to come, out of which we found ourselves unable to discover a release; that Christ hath brought the redemption we stood in need of; that God hath set him forth to be a propiatition for sins that are past, and that he can now be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. This is a fact of revelation not less certain than the fact of the law given from the mount, or the fact of Judgment to come, concerning which we argue.

By many, and indeed by the greater number, this

liberty of forgiveness through Christ is thought to strike a blow at the whole system of law delineated above, and altogether to evacuate the use of it; and it must be allowed that there are passages in Paul's writings, which being taken singly, and apart from the context, might be forced to this construction. But when he expressly argues out the questions, 'Is the law against the promises of God?' 'Shall we sin because grace hath abounded?' without having any thing else in his eye, he comes to the conclusion, that if righteousness could have come by the law, Christ would not have died. But that which puts the question to rest is, that Christ declares of himself that he came not to abrogate the law, but to fulfil it and make it honourable; and above all, that the Christian books wherein the doctrine of forgiveness through Christ is taught, contain throughout in every page a moral law, the same in substance with that delivered from the mount, but ramified and applied to every individual feeling and action which can occur. There is no intention, therefore, that the one should undermine or annihilate the other, but that both go to compose the constitution under which we live. What remains, therefore, is, that we engross this new idea of forgiveness through Christ into our argument, and see how it affects the result.

If there had been any condition attached to this boon of forgiveness, we should have been in no better case than before. If it had been required that, anterior to any hope of pardon for past offences, we should be so far advanced in obedi-

ence as to be of a reputable character for honesty, or charity, or truth, or to be doing our best to attain it; then, verily, things would have been marred at the very commencement. For it would have been left to self to determine the measure of attainment upon which we could found a claim to the benefit, and the question would have been perplexed anew with that uncertain element of self-adjudication, which we have already shown is enough to shake the stability of any system. Besides, from the nature of man, which always founds a claim of right when a condition is present, it would have soon lost the character of a boon, and failed to make the impression of a free unmerited gift. But above all, it would have opened the door to self-esteem and partiality, and every kind of palliation, to juggle us into the conceit of having reached the mark at which all was safe. And being persuaded that we were there arrived, all inducement to further efforts would have been taken away when there was no further advantage to be gained.

Fortunately, however, there is no such condition attached. Every one, however enormous his sins, is invited without money and without price, to enter under this constitution of which the very title is redemption or salvation. Any man who has come to think upon his transgressions, and found no method of escaping from the threatenings of the divine law, hath here a city of refuge to flee to. Memory is not hindered from mourning over the past, but hope is hindered from ever

despairing of the future. The time which might have been consumed in repining over the past not to be reclaimed, the load of unatoned guilt, the fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, the strength of body and of mind, which might have been exhausted in useless penance, are all annihilated at once by the revelation of forgiveness through Jesus Christ: and we are left free to follow the new course under the full force of the new motives which may be impressed on us, being delivered not only from the impediments arising out of our own heavy conscience, but also from the discouragements which that timorous conscience conjures up in the nature of God. While yet we fear him, and see no common ground on which our sinfulness may meet with his purity and be at peace, there can be no heart in us to draw near. Nature shrinks and shudders at his inspection, while she sees no fair way to his favour. Even before a fellow-mortal of great attainments, of severe justice, and of nice power to sift and scrutinize the heart, we shrink back abashed if we are conscious of crime, and fear to stand the penetration of his eye. What conscious criminal ever sought the judgment seat, or thought of the inflexible judge but with a shudder that they were to meet so soon? Did it ever happen that a man drowned in debt, could be but bowed down before the creditor to whom he owed it all? Nay, truly, the consciousness of obligation undischarged, of duty unperformed, of offences done against any one, is like

a case of cold steel around the heart, which will neither allow it to glow nor to expand. But if the unsatisfied, injured party should in mercy and pity discharge the debt at once, then gratitude, admiration, and devotion come to take the place of overwhelming anxiety and fear. The heart is free again, and overcharged with the materials of love and lasting attachment—conscience is delivered of all but a debt of love—the breast is clear, except of affection, and a dedication of a noble kind takes place of the slavery in which we were formerly bound. There ensues all the difference between a slave and a free-man, added to all the difference between a free-man and a devoted friend. Even such a change, no less but greater far, takes place upon the mind which hath not feigned a God from its own imagination, but taken him as revealed in his law, when it comes to understand that through Jesus Christ all is wiped into oblivion, that it is free to feel, free to love its Maker, the same as if it had grown up in filial affection, without once having done any offence.

No sooner is the mind conscious of a deliverance, than it seeks to know through whom and by what means that deliverance hath been brought about. This leads at once to the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and of the price which he paid for our redemption. This is a new stage in the progress, at which there commences a series of thoughts whose magnitude and mercy sweep the mind alternately with wonder, and affection and joy. The fact of being reduced into

open, free favour with God, is of itself a good beginning to any intercourse of love and confidence that is to be joined between us. It clears all the barriers away, and makes us free to commence the course. But the absence of impediment is one thing, the inspiration of heart and strength, and soul and might is another thing. That removal of despair brought the soul as it were to the bread of day, which is sweet after darkest night; but much light of day is needed, and much guardianship, and much security and steadfastness, that we may keep in the narrow way which leadeth unto life! An outfit of new thoughts and feelings is necessary to that new race of obedience which commences the moment we perceive a way opened up from death unto life. Of this outfit of the spirit a great portion is derived from the knowledge of what was done to purchase the liberty in which we stand. The fact of our being admissible to God's favour at any season, if barely told as a naked fact, or contemplated as a single truth, hath little effect over the heart, compared to what it has when contemplated in the expansion which it hath in the Holy Scriptures. Now, as it is the purport of this discourse to lay down the spiritual forces under which the Gospel brings the Christian, that it may be seen how he is moved, it behoves us to place this doctrine of our forgiveness, not only in the light of a bare fact, as we have done above, but in that form which it occupies in the revelation, and in which it is generally found to operate upon the mind.

When we turn from the knowledge of our deliverance to know the being by whom and the way by which we were delivered, we learn from the word of God this stupendous and overawing history of our Saviour and our redemption. In one place it is written, that he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery 'to be equal with God;' and, in another place, 'that he was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and by the word of his power that all things are upholden;' and, in another place, 'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.' Unto this same great and glorious being God speaketh in this wise, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' And in another place, God saith unto his Son, 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; they shall all wax old, as doth a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.'

Such was he who descended into this sphere, and engaged with all its troubles, that he might

purchase our redemption from the curse of the broken law. From everlasting he sat upon the throne of Heaven, and with a sceptre of righteousness he ruled the thrones and powers and dominions which his hand had formed, and which the Word of his power upheld—deserving and receiving in every act of his government the approbation and seal of his everlasting Father. There he sat, rejoicing in the midst of the harmony which he educed, and receiving the adorations of those hosts whose hearts he filled with gladness, and whose tongues he touched with praise;—benignity, beneficence, and radiant glory flowing ever from his countenance, inspiring the ardour of love, and begetting the fruits of righteousness in the bosoms of the creatures which peopled his happy universe.—Beholding them all and blessing them all, even as the natural sun beholdeth and blesseth the fruits of the teeming earth.

Oh, how shall I speak of this unutterable glory, who am a man of unclean lips, and of a deceitful and defiled heart, and have nowhere to gather illustration save this unhappy and unrighteous world! You have felt, or you have seen, the wrapt enjoyment of an aged sire, making a round of his children in their several homes, beholding them blooming and rejoicing in the favour of the Lord, with their little ones encircling them like the shoots of the tender vine. No discords to heal, no sorrows to assuage, no misfortunes to lament in all that have sprung of his loins. What an emotion of paternal glory and pious thankfulness

fills his breast! He looks round upon the numerous and happy flock, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and the tear silently fills his eye, which he lifts to heaven, the seat of God, with a look that would say, Thou hast dealt bountifully with thy servant, now let him depart in peace. One such sight makes a parent forget the care and labour of a long life, one such emotion puts to flight all the fears and forebodings of a parent's heart, his soul is satisfied, the measure of his joy is full.—This emotion is the nearest in kind that we can think of to that which Christ enjoyed through all eternity, in beholding and ministering to the happiness of all created things. His family, his innumerable family, were full of satisfaction, and full of thanksgiving; they dwelt in unity, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in their hand; and he sat upon his throne, the centre from which these pulsations of bliss circulated to the end and limit of creation. Such royal beatitude, such infinite solacement of nature, who shall express! Not man, surely, whose mind is acquaint with sorrow like a sister, whose nature is wrapt around the place of suffering, and whose enjoyments pass like the early cloud and the morning dew.

Then who shall speak of the internal movements of a divine mind, which were enough for its complete beatitude, through those mysterious and solitary ages before creation had a birth? And who shall speak of those communions of love between Father and Son, which of all that he had foregone, was the only thing Christ longed for when on earth,

and which it was his strong prayer, his supreme felicity to have again rejoined? And who shall speak of the delectation which he took with his several attributes? whereof wisdom declareth for herself, 'I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.' And who shall speak of the Son going forth clothed with the plenitude of his Father's power to create new worlds in the depths of space, out of nothing to bring the waste and chaotic deep, and out of wildest chaos to order the teeming womb of nature; to diffuse his spirit over things that lately were not, and create millions of happy beings, brightening with his image, and strong to perform the good pleasure of his will?

If there was such a joyful occasion when this earth was made, such a series of divine operations, such appointments to each creature of his element and his end, and the boundary of his habitation, such a glad survey of the finished whole, and such a holy rest; as if the Creator had a new delight and a perceptible increase of joy from silently surveying his handy-work: and if there was such a merry-making over its completion, that to welcome their youngest sister into being, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy—Who then shall tell of the successive expeditions of the Son of God, to create these resplendent worlds which occupy the spacious universe? Who shall unfold the annals of creation, and narrate the generations of the heavens, and tell how oft, in the

lapse of eternity, he took this divine recreation of bringing worlds into being, and this divine ecstasy of surveying them when complete; and this divine reward of hearing all the elder children of his power, pouring forth hallelujahs of praise and admiration over the work which his hand had made?

Yet such supreme honours did he forego, and such divine occupations did he suspend out of a tender interest in the fallen children of men—wherefore he took for us such a lasting love, passeth our knowledge; but certain it is, he counted it more noble to save the souls of perishing sinners than to govern the infinite myriads of the unfallen. There was something in mercy which tasted sweeter to his mind than the adoration of heaven, or the perfection of bliss—there was something in recovering one lost, and rejoicing over it when found, more in unison with his nature, than in ninety and nine who had never strayed. It cost him more thought to see one corner of his creation vexed with sin and suffering, than to cast his eye complaisantly over the spaces which were abiding spotless and blessed. While there was a resource left, a plan possible, cost what it would, he felt within his paternal soul, that it must be adventured for these poor cast-away enslaved creatures. Low as they were sunk—Satan's willing thralls—the Pariars of creation, there still lay within their bosom, a spark which might be rekindled and set on flame, by divine operation and care. This was enough—that it was practicable to redeem and save—that they could be delivered.

out of the hands of the avenger, and brought home to the paradise of God.

He cared not that he must for a season abdicate the throne, and resign the government of the universe—he cared not that he must wrap up his conditions within the bounded sphere of a creature—he cared not that man's puny strength must be his measure, and man's penetrable and suffering frame, the continent of his being—that his spirit, too, must take on human affections, and his body be afflicted with human wants—and he cared not that hell and hell's sovereign should be loosed against him, and those of his own household become traitors—those he died for, his executioners—death his portion, and the grave his abode. Nor did he care that during the hottest of this fiery trial, his Father should cloud his face and withdraw his countenance, and leave him to tread the winepress of sorrow alone, and roll his garment in his blood—Oh! what is this we speak of? can it be that the Creator should become a creature, dwelling upon the ungrateful earth he made, in want of a morsel of its bread and a cup of its water to satisfy his hunger and his thirst, calling upon the creatures he formed and fed for their charity, for their pity, for their justice, and denied by the unnatural children whom he formed!

There was one attribute of the divinity which he would not lay aside, when he laid aside the rest—he would not part with his mercy, and with so much of his power as was needed to

satisfy his mercy. The power that could have humbled his foes he forewent, the power that could have revenged his wrongs, that could have nourished his famished body, and canopied his naked head, and shielded his unhoused person; all that could have ministered triumph or solacement to his sufferings he forewent; but that Almighty power which might heal sickness and chase sorrow, and put to right disabled frames, and draw back blooming health and warm gushing life to their withered abode, and cheat the grave and the wrathful elements of their prey:—All this power he gave not up, but brought it with him to the earth which called upon it so largely, and requited it so ill. But saving so much power as might be of comfort to the poor creatures he went out to redeem, he stripped himself of all besides, and did come not only within the narrow conditions of manhood, passing through the nobler nature of angels, but into manhood's most mean and melancholy conditions; not suffered to see the light in a human habitation; no sooner born than sought after by the hunters of blood; borne over sandy deserts into a foreign land; bred at an obscure laborious calling, in a town proverbial for wickedness, in a region despised as outlandish. When entered on his office of salvation, a way-laid wanderer, a houseless, homeless man, watched evermore by a host of spies and informers, and carrying in the bosom of his confidence, a venal traitor! Buffeted, spit on, crowned with thorns, basely betrayed, his blood sold for money, justice, the

common right of man, refused him; nay, against the voice and in the sacred face of justice, sacrificed and crucified on that tree where a murderer should have hang, from which a seditious murderer was released, to make room for the Son of God. Oh heavens! oh earth! oh sacred justice! oh power supreme! where slept ye when such indignity was offered to your Prince? ye slept not, but ye murmured forth your indignation in thunder, and ye frowned darkness upon the face of day, and ye heaved forth from the secret place the ghastly bodies of the dead to affright the living; ye slept not, and would have arisen in your sovereign might to defend your Prince from murderous hands; but the voice of your Prince had bound you, bound you to look on and intermeddle not—to look upon the darkest, foulest scene, wherewith the annals of time are defaced and the reputation of the earth defamed.

Such is the brief history of that greatest act of love wherewith the world of men or angels is acquainted. This is the burden of prophets, and evangelists, and apostles—the end and meaning of types and ceremonies and sacrifices—the foundation of a thousand arguments, and the subject of a thousand warm emotions throughout the Scriptures, every one of which, as they occur, elevates the mind to the divine contemplation, and brings with it admiration, affection and joy. We cannot afford, in this argument to be discursive, otherwise we should show in what a variety of ways the above most wonderful dispensation of

grace is fitted to affect the mind into which it is received as the great end of all God's revelations. It can no longer have any doubt upon the tender affections of God towards the sons of men, for whose sake he hath given up his only begotten and well-beloved Son. But besides drawing out our affections to God, it rivets them upon one hitherto unknown, Jesus Christ the Son of God, who underwent such humiliation and poverty and affliction on our account, and healed the division there was between us and God. Whether that division arose from positive wrath on the side of God, it boots not to inquire, seeing that it did exist and doth exist—there being to this day no affection of heart, nor intercourse of thought, nor affinity of happy nature, between a human soul and its Maker, until joined through this intermedium of Christ crucified. Our attention being once fairly turned upon Christ by the interest he hath taken in our recovery, a number of effects are produced which go to influence the future conduct of every one who believeth the above, which we are sure is the unvarnished account of Scripture. Not to repeat the effect produced by the cancelling of the guilt already contracted, and the revival of hope from its abject condition of despair, which doth as it were clear the road and cheer the spirit for the future action, but doth not furnish the instrument and strength for the action, we remark—

That Christ having kept the law of God without spot or blemish, his life stands instead of the law. He is the personification of the law, which

we can now peruse, not in words, but in a living example. This is a mighty advantage to the successful keeping of it, and were there nothing else, would secure a much more perfect performance than when it had its exposition in bare language alone. For looking upon the law itself, our eye is set upon an object which, though holy and pure, is cold, hopeless and cheerless; but looking upon Christ's exemplification of the law, our eye is set upon an object warm with life, friendly, affectionate, and dear to every feeling of the heart.—We have to deal no longer with written letters, construed into mental conceptions, abstract and formless, but with a fellow-mortal, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and smarting at every pore for his love of us, yet holding his obedience steadfast unto the end. Not that the Gospel, of which Christ is the model, drops one tittle of the law, but embosoms it in graceful and gainly attractions, and induces upon it all that persuades and wins and keeps steadfast, and translates it out of language intelligible to the heart of an unfallen creature, into language intelligible to the heart of a creature fallen. For I believe that if man had stood fast in his integrity, this law which now seems so stern, would have felt merciful and kind and good, as well as just. For peace is sweet, and chastity is good, and forgiveness is kind, and truthfulness is the very bond of confidence and love. These requirements are in themselves as much of the essence of mercy as is the Gospel; and it is only our imper-

fection which makes them seem otherwise—they go not with the grain, and therefore we wince. The law is a gracious object to an unfallen creature, for abstract unprejudiced reason to love and admire, but the moment that reason mingles with flesh and blood, it is invaded and overcome by a thousand sympathies and antipathies, over which reason hath but a slender control. Now the Gospel catches at these very sympathies and antipathies of flesh and blood, by investing the law in Christ's person with life, colour, beauty, and every attraction; from an idea making it a living, loving thing, taking it and dressing it so as to be gainly and winning to the heart. The law is the Gospel to the unfallen, the Gospel is the law to the fallen. The law is God manifest in words, The Gospel is God manifest in flesh. Around the purity of the law, Christ hath arrayed every thing which, not being vicious, is pleasant to the heart of man, bearing in his hand every prize which, not being vain, can inflame the ambition of man, speaking from his mouth every word which, not being flattery, can sooth and exhilirate and ennoble the breast of man, enduring for our sake every suffering which can make the sufferer great. In the genius of the Gospel come purity and loveliness and benevolence and hope and prosperity, with the whole constellation of advantageous and attractive things; whereas, in the genius of the law, purity stood with stern brow, frowning terror, deaf to mercy and impervious to hope, while a thousand remorseless shapes

circled around his head, and a sword of judgment in his right hand, like the seraphs, turned and flamed towards every thing that liveth.

Besides this new attractiveness which he hath shed over the law, Christ the Saviour draws upon himself the admiration and devotion of every one who receives the report of his salvation; and a personal feeling of attachment is begotten which works with the utmost power upon every noble and generous faculty of nature. There is hardly one aspect of his character, or one view of his undertaking which doth not move the heart. Man is a creature who admires generosity; here it is beyond dimension:—who loves mercy; here it is interfering for a world and saving a thousand generations:—who shouts applause when a sovereign condescends by personal kindness to bless a mean and menial subject; here is the Creator and ruler of heaven and earth serving and redeeming the most worthless creatures of his hand. Man is a creature who feels for favours conferred upon himself, and glows to requite his benefactor: here is the interrupted favour of God restored, and the inaccessible fortune of heaven brought within his reach. Man is a creature who sympathizes in his own welfare, and longs after his own glory with a restless ambition; here is one delivering him from the odious captivity of sin, and opening up to him the gates of glory and immortality and life.

But away from personal advantage there are attributes about Christ which draw the human soul

after him as an object of disinterested admiration. Man is a creature who prizeth steadfast truth—here it is that never blanched in the utmost trial: who thirsts for wisdom—here is the full ocean of it: who standeth in awe before power, and blesseth it when mercifully expended—here it is in quantity unlimited, never put forth save to compose the stormy elements and heal the diseased body, and soothe the troubled mind, and deliver victims from death and the grave and black corruption, their unsatisfied daughter. Man is a creature who cannot help loving a fellow-man who is of good and gracious qualities; here is one gentle in his manners, sweet in his temper, tender of heart, all-bountiful of disposition. Man is a creature that looks up to, and reposeth on one who is of great influence and of a commanding nature, provided he be also of a merciful turn; here is one in whose authoritative presence no cruel nor deceitful man could appear, yet towards the good gentle as a lamb, to the needy a physician of soul and body, recovering, comforting and restoring all who besought his aid.

And to cast over these manifold attractions the certainty and duration of celestial natures, he is God over all, the Almighty who was and is and is to come; who was to that spot of earth where he dwelt a guardian genius, a second angel of Providence;—the former angel of Providence blessing and afflicting, bowing down and raising up as he is wont, this second angel of Providence always coming after, to heal and comfort and restore. And so

considerate was he, that he left in heaven every attribute of the deity which is terrible and unapproachable, and upon which unfallen spirits alone can look without fear and trembling; bringing with him to the earth only those attributes of the divinity which might comfort our abode, purchase our salvation, and win our admiration without losing our affection and trust. And what more can be said than that as a friend, a brother, a teacher, a Saviour, a divine protector, he hath combined in his character and manifested in his life every thing which can endear him to the soul of man.

I may conclude, therefore, that the whole soul which cometh to Christ is captivated with his image, and by constraining love brought under his influence; and that a foundation is laid for union and fellowship of nature: which attachment to the person of Christ and adoption of his graces, are identical with the obedience of the law, seeing he is the personification of the law; and the breadth of this obedience is commensurate with the breadth of the attachment which we have seen, is no less than the whole capacity of man.—Let this suffice for the *commencement* of the new obedience springing from the knowledge of Christ and him crucified.

Now for the *continuance and perpetuity* of the same, there is a provision no less abundant than that which hath been set forth for its *commencement* in the cancelling of past prohibitions and the overcoming of present disinclinations. This consists generally in the assurance of Christ and the Father,

that their Spirit shall supply our want of energy and power; that, if we walk by divine rule, we may go on without fear of failure, and shall grow in holiness as the morning light shineth more and more unto the perfect day. He sets before his converts that weight of advantage which will accrue from perseverance, and that redoubled crime and punishment which will come upon them if they fall away. He possesses them with new knowledge of God, (which we shall forthwith unfold a little) and new sentiments towards their fellow-men; so that the whole strain of their feelings, human and divine, becomes amended. He assures them of divine grace to be made sufficient for them, and divine strength to be made perfect in their weakness. For every difficulty he giveth a counsel, and for every emergency a promise of deliverance, and for every trial a way of escape. He swears by his faithfulness that he will never desert them—that he watcheth over them as a shepherd watcheth over his sheep—that, as he died for them, he liveth for them—as he justified them by his death, he will save them by his life—and that he ever liveth to make intercession for them at the throne of God.

These assurances of God's establishing Spirit are to the future what the assurances of his forgiveness are to the past. They array upon our side all the confidence in God and Christ, which have been awakened by the truths pictured above. We seem to carry in our bosom a heavenly charm, by which we shall be more than conquerors over all our enemies. For if God be for us, who can be

against us? It is Christ that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? So that besides knocking off the fetters which bound conscience to the memory of the past, and awakening us from sleep with the voice of many affections, he openeth into the future a fine cheerful prospect of increasing activity and enlarging joy. The soul is comforted on each of the three sides on which she toucheth the existing world, the past, the present, and the future. She is left at ease from chiding memory and biting remorse, the unpaid accounts of former years being discharged; and no distress nor execution awaiteth her in the future, to scare her from that quarter of thought. She can ruminate over the past, to learn lessons of her own infirmity and her Maker's mercy; over the future she can range, in the anticipation of progressive purity and blessedness. The whole aspect and economy of time cometh to be changed. The past which upbraided, and the future which threatened, drove her with desperation to seize the present, and empty its cupful of enjoyment, come what might. Now the past, which instructeth her musings, and the future, which feedeth her joyful hopes, wean the soul from the present which was wont to absorb her wholly, and she is enabled to deal fairly by the three provinces of time. The fierceness of passion and pleasure craving for instant possession, ceaseth to scorch up the faculties of thought and purpose. Coolness of reflection, calmness of purpose and patience of hope, cast their mild light in upon the soul, like the beams of the morning

through our casement, rousing us from the lethargy of further indulgence, and guiding forth our footsteps to the healthful labours of life.

No sooner doth the soul, thus unbound and awakened and encouraged forth, adventure upon the keeping of the divine commandments, than she gathers, from the revealed word of God, a world of new knowledge, of which heretofore, in all her travellings with the works of the wise and learned, she had discovered nothing. The causes and intentions of creation, the mysteries of providence—upon which philosophy can cast so little light—are opened up, and she is brought into the secrets of the Most High. Her own fallen nature is disclosed to her; a great and glorious restoration is made known; and, whereas she formerly beheld in her own constitution an inscrutable mystery, and felt a constant warfare within, she is now taught what she was at first and what hath brought on her present degradation, how she may have peace, and by what means she may ascend unto a place as high if not higher than that from which she hath fallen.

She cometh to know, that this God, whom she fancied hidden in secrecy, sits displayed on every visible object; that this God, whom she had placed remote from her concerns, is full of carefulness over her welfare, and of promise for every want and enjoyment of her being. That he hath made a promise for the bread which we eat, and for the raiment wherewith we are clothed; for the rain which watereth the earth, and for the

dew which maketh the outgoings of the evening and the morning to rejoice; that his bow in the heavens is a promise of seedtime and harvest, to endure for the nourishment of every thing that lives; that he holdeth the gifts of knowledge and understanding and a sound mind in his hand, and serveth them out to men; that power also is his, and length of days and riches, and honour. All these regions which aforetime floated in our mind as the domain of fickle fortune, or were given into the hands of a fixed fate, or made dependant on the agency and freewill of man, turn out upon knowing the promises of God, to be administrations of his bounty for sustaining the world and comforting its afflicted state;—remnants of his creation-gifts, which he did not remove at the great forfeiture of all our estate, but secured for ever as divine attachments, to hold us to himself, against the great current of sin which drifteth all things into the cold and frozen regions where God is forgotten and unknown. Thus fortune and fate and human power, and every adventure and change in human life become hung and suspended from the throne of God, so soon as we comprehend the revelations of the Almighty's purposes. The atheism of human thought, and the godlessness of human action pass away, and in their stead come a knowledge of the divine nature, and a confidence in the divine promises. The blankness and blackness of the future become enlivened with holy light. Footing is found for the bright daughters of hope to clear the way, that warm wishes and constant

purposes may follow after; and into real existence cometh the fancy of the poet:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be blest."

Having thus gathered by perusal of God's revelations, how much, in the past times when we did not acknowledge him, he was working out the health and happiness of our life; how the sun did rise and the rain descend upon our fields, all the same as upon the fields of the righteous and devout; we become wonder-struck with a sense of his forgiveness and his good-will to the worst of men. We say, What could induce him to feed and clothe and comfort us, who were shutting our ears to the knowledge and steeling our hearts to the feeling of his goodness, and counter-working all his gracious designs! why did he not contract his bounty, or send the stream of it another way? We deserved nothing, we returned him nothing; surely his lovingkindness hath been great and his forbearance unspeakable, while we followed false and fabulous imaginations: how much more kindly loving and how much more forbearing will he now be when we give ourselves to search out his revealed purposes, and to walk in all his statutes and commandments blameless!

Thus the soul when she betaketh herself to consult the counsels of the Lord, cometh to love him at every new step of discovery, and to admire his mercy and forgiveness and most disinterested goodness towards her, while she lay enveloped in a darkness of her own making. How much more

doth she admire and magnify his name, when besides recovering the two lost provinces of creation and providence, she comes to know the two new provinces of grace and glory, prepared for her and for all who walk in the ways of holiness.

Then she beginneth to burst the shell of her former darkness, and to open her eyes on light; her callow nakedness sprouteth with a divine plumage; she spreadeth her wings and ariseth to heaven, and floateth over the oceans of eternity; she soareth like the eagle, and looketh steadily into the face of God; she feeleth for the divine Spirit within her, and setteth her heart upon all excellency. She glorieth evermore in the predictions and promises of God to put her corruption to death and reconcile her unto himself, to write holiness upon all her members and holiness upon her inward parts, to strike fruits of righteousness in her barren bosom, to take away her hard and stony heart and give her a heart of flesh, upon the tablets whereof to write his laws, that it may become a temple for his Holy Spirit to dwell in; to hide all her transgressions and cover all her sins, and give her rest from a clamorous conscience and accursed fears, that she may have peace and be refreshed with the full river of joy which maketh glad the city of God. She comprehendeth the fulness of his grace, she bindeth herself to holiness with cords of the strongest love, and rejoiceth in her God as all her salvation and all her joy.

Then cometh into view the end and consummation of his love; the fulness of future glory, worthy, and

alone worthy, to follow such a procession of creation and providence and grace, the three visible kingdoms of the Almighty's bounty. The promises, which fetch this out from the hidden place beyond the limits of time and visible things, are the brightest of all the rest. This body—the seed-bed of pains and diseases, the nurse of appetites and passions strong—shall be renovated most glorious to behold, most durable, most sweetly compacted, and yielding most exquisite sensations of bliss. This society, so ripe with deceivers, betrayers, slanderers and workers of mischief, shall be winnowed of all its chaff, and constituted anew under God's own government, where shall be conjoined such intimacies and loving unions, as shall put to the blush friendship and love and brotherhood, and every terrestrial affinity. And the soul which here doth peep and feel about the surface of things, shall dive then into all mysteries of knowledge. Intuition shall see far and near the essences of all created things. And all intelligence shall fan flames of benevolence, and feed eternal purposes of well-doing to every creature within our reach. All heaven shall smile for us; for us every neighbouring creature shall labour and we for them. Angels with the sons of men shall exchange innocent love, and the creatures under man shall serve him with love, and drink from him their joy as we shall drink our joy from the service of God. Oh! who shall tell the glory of those new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The imagery of

inspired minds is exhausted on the theme, and all their descriptions, I am convinced, fall as far short of the reality, as the description of Nature's beauty falls short of the sight and feeling of her charms. All language is a pale reflexion of thought, all thought a pale reflexion of present sensation, and all sensation this world hath ever generated, a sickly, faint idea of what shall be generated hereafter in the soul and body of man.

This body of truth, touching God's presidency over the four great kingdoms of his dispensations —Creation, Providence, Grace, and Glory, is all unknown until by his revealed word it becomes discovered. Such knowledge will, if any thing will, produce upon the mind an abiding attachment to God; and no attachment to him can exist till these the characters of his operations become known. For he is not to be beloved by sympathy of heart or similarity of conscious nature; as man loveth his fellow-man. His manner of existence is a mystery undisclosed and undiscernible, and unfelt by every creature. He liveth unapproachable. What he is, where he is, how he is, no created thing can understand. All knowledge of him and love of him must therefore come from beholding his works, or feeling his workmanship within us, or rejoicing in the power he hath derived to us, or knowing the councils and intentions of his mind; which are nowhere expounded save in the record of his promises and of his acts, which are promises fulfilled. Therefore it stands to reason, that until these promises are studied and trusted to; no sincere love or generous devotion to

the Godhead will divulge itself in our thoughts, words, or deeds: that when they are fixed and rooted in the mind, there is no end to the delight which we shall have in fulfilling the will and pleasure of Him who doth so much and intendeth so much for our everlasting welfare.

Such are the provisions which Christ hath made for commencing and continuing the obedience of the law of God. They consist, in brief, in removing heavy obstacles which sickened the heart—in making the path as attractive and easy as is possible for a fallen creature—in attaching us with all our powers unto himself, our leader and commander—in pouring into us the full spirit of performance, the sum of saving knowledge, the full tide of expectation, with the unalterable assurance of success. The whole face of affairs is changed by the introduction of this new personage; the work to be done is cast anew, and the power of man to do it is, as it were, raised from the grave.

And here we make a pause, to cast a look back upon the progress which we have made in delineating the constitution under which the world is placed. After showing its many passing excellencies in the last discourse, we found ourselves hemmed in with a consciousness of transgression from which no resource of reason was able to discover an escape. This circumference of impeding guilt not only hath the Lord Jesus cast down, and made enlargement to our feet, but he hath, as it were, superinduced upon the institute of law an institute of power to keep the law. He hath pre-

sented a mass of truth in his Gospel concerning both himself and ourselves, which puts metal and temper into the mind for coping with the extreme positions of the law; and this new competency he hath given us by fair, natural means, addressing to us honest and honourable inducements from this world and the world to come. He hath not, like the reasoners exposed in the beginning of this discourse, endeavoured to degrade the sublime elevations of the law; which work enthusiasm upon the heart, as the heaven-piercing peaks of a mountainous country work enthusiasm upon the imagination: neither hath he deposed conscience from the post of observation to replace her with some less lynx-eyed guardian, but on the contrary, by the unction of his Spirit he cleanseth her eye and maketh it more eagle-piercing. But he hath clothed the law in performance, and stood up its practical interpreter, not to the ear, but to the eye, to the heart, and to every sympathy whereof the heart is the sacred seat. It comes now to us sanctioned by our dearest friend, our noblest kinsman, the Son of God and the Son of man; teaching by example, and working by the desire to be like him whom we love. Its accusations for past sins which overloaded memory and overclouded hope, and with joylessness sickened all present activity, he hath scattered and dissolved. The soul is delivered from the valley of the shadow of death, from a fearful pit and from the miry clay: her feet are set upon a rock, and a new song is put into her mouth. Having made us free men, joyful, free

men, he layeth siege to us by every sweet and noble suit. He putteth on human charities as a raiment, and godly graces as a vesture. Thus arrayed, he comes with honourable language, addressing us as friends and brothers. Then he unsealeth high overtures, setting before us enlargement from ignominious fallen nature, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—refinement of our gross impurity, into the image of God created in righteousness and true holiness. Oh! it is a noble music which he maketh to the soul of man: sweet as the breathing sonnet of lovers, and spirit-stirring as the minstrelsy of glorious war; it rouseth the noble deeds like the Tyrtean song, sung on the eve of battle to noble Spartan youth; and it rejoiceth the heart of sin-oppressed nature, as the voice of liberty from Tully's lips rejoiced the senate-house of Rome upon the famous Ides of March, when godlike Brutus—

> "————Shook his crimson steel,
> And bade the Father of his country hail."

Oh! that the spirit of the antients would rise again and ashame these modern men, who go dreaming in universities over a philosophy which hath no kernel of nourishing food, a philosophy of mind they call it, but it is a mind without a heart,—who go wearying the dull ear of senates with talk about law, and jargon about the moral government of men; while in all their researches after wisdom and government, they see no form nor comeliness in the institutes of God, and hear no music to enchant them in the gospel of Christ,

though it poureth the full diapason of harmony into the heart of man:—which their deafness to the voice divine doth interpret the platonic notion of the music of the spheres,—most ravishing melody ever sounding in our ears, yet inaudible from the noise and bustle in the midst of which we have our abodes. Methinks the quiet groves of Pythagoras, where they would have five years of silent meditation with their own thoughts and study of the divine oracles; or the school of Socrates, that chastiser of haughty sophists; or the oratory of Paul, who converted members of the renowned Areopagus, and shook monarchs upon their royal seats; or something equally powerful were needed to move this age and generation of learned men, who look to Christ as if he were a fanatic, above whose ignoble sphere they stand most highly exalted.

But, in the ear of that justice of which they affect the quest, and of that well-being of the mind for which they profess to consult, I do solemnly invoke them; and—(though the age of chivalry be past, and this cause of ours be not served by defiance)—moved by their lethargy and indifference to that which should set their life in action, I do *challenge* them;—to show me in all the records of history or speculation, any one constitution of laws in spirit so pure, in application so extensive, in effects so beneficial, in motives so spirit-stirring and spirit-ennobling, in its whole machinery so complete, and in its several parts so excellent, as this constitution of law and gospel hath been proved to

be. I do solemnly pledge myself to keep the field against all the devices of moralists or legislators for the elevation of human nature, in defence of this divine constitution, by which that love the mind hath in exact equity is satisfied; by which all the good that accrues to the individual or the commonwealth from the obedience of wholesome laws is secured; by which all pure sentiments are indulged—all enthusiasm of the heart awakened—all tender affections full-blown—all noble desires drawn out—all soft and exquisite graces of demeanour patronized—all stern and unbending virtues upheld; by which, to crown all, anticipation is allowed to steep his wings in the bliss of heaven, and Time runs posting onwards to his grave, driving before him to their graves all cares, troubles, weaknesses, and sorrows, whence eternity awaketh us girt about with beauty and with strength, to fill up the measure and duration of celestial engagements.

Here endeth our scheme of the constitution under which it hath pleased God to place the world: but before passing to the sanction thereof, it seemeth good to gather it into one, and, with a word of advice and warning to set it forth, as they were wont in antient times, and are wont still in the island of Japan, to post up in conspicuous places brief summaries of the laws for the information of the people.

The Gospel is intended to honour the law and to patronize holiness—being not an end but an expedient for an end. The advancement of human

nature in the holiness of the law—that is the end, the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that is the instrument. To gain this end, it catches fallen nature softly upon every side, and gently elevates it with the breath of instruction and affection into favour with God. Thereunto God's moral nature appears in human guise, performing before the eye and heart of man, upon the stage of human life, a drama or representation of God's true sentiments and feelings towards our kind. Along with this attractive representation of the divinity, Christ brings the rudiments out of which to construct a new heart and life; viz. new principles of conduct—new hopes—new ambitions—new interests; and he brings new graces of character—meekness, humility, forbearance and charity; and he brings new institutes of life, the particulars of the moral law; and withal he brings new rewards—peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and assurance of everlasting glory. With all which, as his instrument, he would take a purchase upon the sunken fabric of human nature, and raise it up towards the dignity from which it fell.

Now it must be confessed, that with all this moral machinery, which is, we believe, the best that divine wisdom could devise for the work, the work is not completely accomplished. After all, the Gospel doth not secure perfect obedience to the law upon the part of man, but it bringeth him up to the highest pitch of excellence that his nature is capable of. It doth not lead him again into the innocency of Eden, or bring back to his soul

the primeval sinlessness left upon it by the creative fingers of God:—but it doth the best that could be done. The best Christian that ever lived is a poor creature compared with Father Adam; while yet he trode the earth in the majesty of innocence with all the lower tribes attendant on his steps—his body purely attempered to the scene, his soul replete with celestial instincts—angels of light his visitants, and God himself cheering his yet unsullied habitation. And, by how much Mother Eve was fairer than all her daughters, by so much was she more pure, more tenderly affectioned, more modest, more chaste from the throb of passion or the tinge of shaded thought, than the purest vestal or the holiest matron that hath ever lived. It was for them to render perfect obedience to the moral code of Christ. It was for Christ the Son of God, the second Adam, to render it obedience also. Ours it is to be content with humbler attainments; to do our utmost in the strength of the Word and the Spirit of God; and, having done so, to be humble, full of confession and prayer, full of trust in Him, who, after he has done the most upon us here below, hath promised to complete his work, by acquitting us in the day of judgment, and saving us from the wrath to come.

So that, after all, it comes to this, that we do our best:—but then it is with evangelical instruments that we do our best. We do our best after taking to ourselves the whole armour of God: the moralist doth his best without that armour. The saint, possessing himself of all

knowledge and hope and grace which the Gospel reveals, does his best; the moralist, neglecting these, and leaning to Nature alone, does his best. The one honours God throughout, the other honours Nature throughout; the one is a disciple of Christ, the other a disciple of reason alone; the one therefore may look for favour at God's hand whom he hath in nothing undervalued, the other may look for disfavour from God, whose instructions he hath set aside; the one may look for success, being guided by the higher wisdom and moved along by the stronger affections of the Gospel, the other has no success to expect save from the urgency of endeavours and the strenuousness of resolutions. The moralist is like a ship spreading her canvass without wind to fill it; the Christian spreads the same canvass, and has all the moving power which the Gospel can give. Moreover the moralist bows himself to a task; the Christian cheers himself to an office of love: the one as he advances becomes highminded, as he fails becomes heartbroken; the other as he advances becomes thankful and glad, as he fails becomes humble and watchful, but not heartbroken: the one knows of no acquittal for his daily hourly offences; the other knows of a Redeemer for the one, when nature sinks beneath the effort, knows not of any fresh supply; the other in the midst of his weakness knows of grace that is sufficient for him, and of strength that is perfected in weakness.

But, though it be not complete obedience that

is obtained under this constitution, we are not to conclude that the constitution is imperfect:—on the other hand, it hath no weak part which we can discern. It saves the character of God, upon the consistency of which all his intelligent creatures hang dependant, by presenting a law reaching out in all directions to the sublime of moral virtue; while at the same time it exhibits his tenderness and love to his creatures through the image of his Son and the merciful overtures of the Gospel. It sets before our eyes the ideal of every thing perfect, familiarizing our knowledge with the perfection of virtue, strewing the path of virtue with promises, and planting at the goal the rewards of eternity;—which will, if any thing will, stimulate us to put forth our best. And, that the enthusiasm thus begotten, by being compassed about with weakness and aiming at impossibilities, may not speedily expend itself, the constitution of the Gospel, broad as human feeling, comes and lays affectionate hold on every good sentiment and substantial interest, and putting life into every sinew of the mind, gives it wherewithal to sustain its enthusiasm after holiness unceasingly. Moreover, to catch every favourable breeze for setting out, it is ready, like an open haven, to receive us, ov[illegible] delay, welcoming us to refit however d[illegible]lling every sail, and giving us assurance of speeding well. This is the beginning of it; and the continuance of it is by the same cheerful and blessed encouragement. That indemnifi-

cation for past offences which gave us heart to begin, being equally applicable to present disabilities and errors, gives us heart to carry on.

We do not reach the commanded, it is true, but we do never satisfy ourselves with having done the best. We are alive to the things which are still before, and strive to reach them. Our imperfections make us humble and meek and fervent in prayer; and could no more be wanted than our attainments, which make us conscious of the love of God and the resemblance of Christ. But these imperfections do not hang in heavy arrears upon conscience, but pass away through the mercy of our God in Christ, and as they recur they draw us near to Christ through the sense of weakness and forlornness without him. So that the evil and the good, the attainment and the failure, come in for their share in cultivating our completeness in the stature of Christ.

In fine, the dispensation of the Gospel answereth to man's condition, as heart doth to heart, or face to face. It is a stimulus to our advancement; it rallies us when driven back, and breathes hope in the most perilous extremes. But, though it be a refuge in discomfiture, it is no encouragement to shun the encounter. That forgiveness of God through Christ, which is its watchword, is not yielded, save to a spirit that truly sighs after it; none of these consolations of grace and mercy come to any who are not occupied to their utmost with the sincerest desire after holiness. No one can calculate on this acceptance into favour, or this remission of his

daily sins, who is not occupying his faculties and his means with Christian efforts, strengthened and sustained by Christian hopes and Christian aids. The moment he ceases to make head after his captain's orders he loseth of his captain's favour, and if he come not under obedience he inherits double disgrace in the end.—So that the spiritual man is held to obedience by his affections, his interests, his desires, his hopes, his fears, his every faculty and power;—than which nothing more can be made of any creature perfect or imperfect.

Now as to those who hold out against this constitution of grace and justice and mercy, refusing to shelter themselves beneath law and gospel, the two wings of his love, with which the Lord of Hosts overshadoweth the tabernacles of men, (though this is not the time to speak of judgment) we cannot close without asking them what defence they can set up for themselves at all? They admire not the purity of the law, else they would long to reach as near to it as possible through the means of the Gospel; they fear not its undischarged demands, else they would flee to the cross of Christ for a ransom; they are not accessible to affection, else Christ's charities would attract them; they are not grateful for favours, else Christ's unspeakable gifts would ingratiate him with their souls; they care not for the favour of God, else they would revere his overtures; they are not afraid of judgment, else they would provide against its issues. Heaven they affect not; hell they dread not. The compass of God's promises containeth

no attraction; the scope of his power createth no awe; the magnitude of his threatenings engendereth no terror. The past hath no sticking remorses, the womb of the future no fearful presentiments. The present world gloweth before them in all the glory of the New Jerusalem; time filleth their minds like the immensity of eternity; the favour of the world stands them in the stead of God's. Some form of creation is their idol, some condition of earth their heaven.

Men who have thus stood out against the overtures of God, and steeled their hearts to the noble and engaging sentiments of the Gospel, have made free choice of the fatal consequences, and have themselves alone to blame. They cannot dispute God's right to place us under government, nor that the constitution of government, under which he hath placed us, is well devised to please every good feeling and to uphold every good interest. In rejecting it, therefore, they stand condemned at the bar of every good feeling which refused to listen to his voice, and of every good interest which refused to be built up by his power. And, if it should appear in the progress of this inquiry, that God denudes their future being of those good feelings which would not hear his voice, and ships them far away from those good interests which would not be upheld by his power, can they have the boldness to complain? Why, the whole matter is before them! They can take or reject; and if they coolly reject, they must stand to the consequences of their choice.

No legislator ever pledged himself to make laws which no one would break: neither does God. The legislator makes the best he can devise, and assigns to the breaking of them suitable punishments: so doth God. A culprit may curse the law, but the law seizeth him notwithstanding: so doth God. This is universally held just, wise, and the greatest mercy upon the whole: why should not God have the same verdict of our mind? For no code was ever constructed on such principles of mercy and forgiveness as his, or took such pains to captivate its subjects to obedience. But have our verdict, or not have it, God careth not. He hath prepared a constitution upon which all men may be justified before all created intelligences, and upon which they may be condemned before all created intelligences; upon which he can justify himself to himself, and to the nobler orders of creation, and even to man's own conscience, reprobate and sunken though it be. That is all, and there needeth no more upon this head of our argument.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART IV.

THE GOOD EFFECTS OF THE ABOVE CONSTITUTION, BOTH UPON THE INDIVIDUAL AND UPON POLITICAL SOCIETY.

God is not wanting in his care of that constitution under which he hath placed the world; but accompanies the acceptance and obedience thereof with all the rewards which the soul of man is capable of tasting in this sublunary state.

Being turned to contemplate those pictures of purity which the law contains, we forget all meaner things, and are delivered by degrees from the vulgar fears and ordinary measures under which we were formerly in bondage. The guardianship of human laws and the eye of man, the laugh of the world and the world's frown, to which we are such slaves, lose their power in proportion as conscience, which is the eye of the mind, comes to take the oversight of our affairs. A liberty, a self-mastery, an independence upon the opinions of others, and a mind ever conscious of a right intention, come instead of artifice and cunning and plodding adherence to customary rules. And this self-guidance is hindered from degenerating into self-conceit or self-willedness, by the constant superiority of the law of God, which is, as it were, the

telescope through which conscience looks upon the world of duty. The spheres of honour and honesty and domestic worth and patriotism become absorbed, with all the estimable things which they contain, in the wider sphere of obedience unto God, which contains them as the *primum mobile* of the antient astronomers contained the celestial spheres.

Now it cannot otherwise happen, than that a mind constantly accustomed to behold, and constantly training itself to practise whatever is noble and good, must grow greatly in its own esteem, and advance likewise in the estimation of the wise and good, and rise into influence over the better part of men: so that there will attend upon the goings of the servant of God, a light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, a harmony of motion pleasant to all beholders, and a liberty of action delightful to himself. There will also grow within his soul a unison of faculties through the tuition of the law of God—impetuous passions being tamed, irregular affections being guided in their proper courses, the Understanding being fed from the Fountain of truth, Hope looking to revelations that shall never be removed, and Will being subordinated to the good pleasure of God. Like a busy state, in which there is no jarring of parties, but one heart and one soul through all its people; like the body, when every member doth its office, and the streams of life flow unimpeded; the soul, thus pacified from inward contention, and fed with the river of God's pleasure, enjoys a health and

strength, a peace which passeth all understanding, and a joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

These and many other rewards, whereof the Scriptures contain the constant promise, are ever addressing the feelings and interests of man, in order to win him over to be a freeman and denizen of the divine government: and, as he enters himself with heart and hand to the duties of the same, these spiritual rewards grow apace, and he feels himself more and more emancipated from the bondage of all other laws and customs into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It feels with his soul as when a slave escapes from his stripes and weary toils unto his rightful liberty; as when a free man of this land escapes from the spies of police, the inquisitions of prefects, the passports of men in power, and the thousand other degradations with which foreign nations are impeded and perplexed. There needeth no one to point out the new happiness which he possesseth. Nature speaks within: he is as man should be: he feeleth his state; he useth it; he rejoiceth in it. So doth the soul under divine government, compared with which the best human administration of law, and the most sweetly regulated intercourse of social life, is a masterful rule and a degrading servitude.

Nor are there wanting, upon the other hand, many foul degradations and cleaving curses to disturb the mind and wreck the peace of him who keeps aloof from this Goshen of the soul, which none of these plagues afflicts.

The accidents of life come upon him like an armed man upon his sleeping foe. He has no consolation when the sight of his eyes is taken from him with a stroke, when the beauty of his health doth fail, or when disaster hath smitten the four corners of his house; but he feeleth like a dismantled ship upon the troubled waters, or like a desolate wreck upon the naked shore. And though the outward estate of ungodly men should be prosperous, they are ever liable to be scorched and consumed within the soul by many fires. The fever of passion, the rage of appetite, the heat of riot and intemperance, the ardour of unregulated love, the glow of indignation and the burning of revenge, and the other furies of unregenerate nature, are ever waiting an occasion to set the breast in a flame. And anon, like those unhappy regions of the earth which alternately are invaded by the pestilent Siroc of the South and the biting blasts of the North, the souls of such ungodly men are liable to as many invasions of an opposite kind. Disappointment of fond hope, defeat of strong desire, weariness of pleasure, the coldness of malice and hatred, the cruelty of wit and satire, and the indifference which every earthly good oft tasted begets —these, like scornful and deriding demons, lie in wait at the extremes and issues of all their eager pursuits, to reward them with mockery and cold disdain for yielding such willing obedience. To these outward and inward grievances, to which they doom themselves that know not God, must be added many fears and many intrusions from the

world around;—the fear that fortune may desert those channels which now with full tide she filleth, and leave us naked and waste;—the fear that our hypocrisies may be detected, and our concealments disclosed to the eye of public scorn or legal justice;—the fear of death, which will not be parried, but aye makes head again with every sickness;—the intrusion of social customs upon our domestic liberty—the intrusion of fashionable follies upon our own good sense—the intrusion of rivals upon our beloved path—the intrusion of another's rights upon our rights, and the legal contentions to which this giveth rise;—these, with many other fears and intrusions which it were tedious to enumerate, are ever trespassing upon that mind which is not placed under the regimen of God:—which is the only regimen that arms the soul and body at all points to meet its disaster, and gives it to dwell in a land from the border of which these invaders are scared away, as the frights and terrors of darkness are scared from the borders of light.

It doth therefore appear, that this government of God, whose unseen rewards we are about to disclose, is patronized during the whole of human life, by all the watchmen and guardians of our spiritual welfare; and that the adverse government of the world, whose unseen miseries we are also about to disclose, hath many warnings of an unhappy mind and an uneasy condition, to remove men away from the evil star under which they pass their lives. These goods and ills with which the soul is visited, according to the choice it makes,

are the only instruments which God has employed in order to make way for his revealed law. He hath not endeavoured to work upon men by the high places and emoluments of the earth; nor bribed their senses, like the God of Mahomet, with indulgence here and higher indulgences hereafter; nor ministered to vanity or pride or ambition or any of the inordinate affections with which the world tempts the nature of man. Riches and possessions and beauty and pleasure are not proffered by Him as the rewards of obedience, which he requires in the frown of every thing that nature loves, and in the eclipse of every thing in which the world glories.

Hence it cometh to pass, that between the peaceful, spiritual rewards of religion, and the outward ambitious rewards of the world, there is waged a contention for the heart of man; and a division takes place of those who cleave to the divine constitution from those who reject it. This division supersedes every other distinction in the eye of God, who is concerned chiefly for the honour of that institution which he hath been at so much pains to reveal. He hath made an appeal to every good and noble principle of nature, he hath introduced it with a moral grandeur which made the host of heaven to admire, at a sacrifice whose value none but himself doth know, and he has sustained it with every advantage present and to come: and, having done so much, he standeth to a side and waiteth the determination of man. From earliest youth to latest age we are solicited

to accept his overtures; our former delinquencies are offered to be cast into the shade, and our late obedience to be accepted, as if it had been yielded from the very beginning of life. It argues in the heart, by which such easy and advantageous offers are rejected, a callousness and deadness to the voice of God—in lieu of which, it is not to be expected that any attainments in knowledge, reputation, or morals will compensate. Our Creator is not served with the powers which he gave, nor is our Preserver acknowledged for the blessings which he sent, nor our Father loved in return for that love wherewith he hath loved us—our King is held at nought—our Redeemer is trampled under foot—heaven is not sought—hell is not eschewed: meanwhile the world is courted, the approbation of our fellow-men is hunted after, every fleeting pleasure is grasped at, and every phantom of hope pursued; and, though life be unstable as the morning cloud, it is doated on and preferred to all which God is able to bestow. In sum, God, in his most gainly attributes arrayed, is rejected for the sake of this world, clothed though she be with sickness and sorrow and change, and every symptom of speedy dissolution.

It is reasonable to expect that such wicked contempt of all that our Creator can do for our honour and advantage, should draw down upon our heads fatal consequ[illegible]th in this life and that which is to come[illegible]rgues in the heart which remains [illegible]er-powering influences [illegible]cy

which cannot long co-exist with the finer parts of human nature, or it argues that heart so overmastered by some adverse sinful influence, as will likely carry it headlong into evil excesses. Accordingly it will be found that the fruit of deliberately rejecting the constitution of God, when conscience hath presented it in its proper amiable bearings, is either to sink the unfortunate party out of the region of the noble and the good into besotted callousness and brute-like indifference to honourable avocations, or to drive him into the arms of some restless prone ambition, which pricks him with constant discontent, and urges him onward without control. There are, indeed, multitudes in every Christian land who get so involved with other knowledge and with other affairs, as never during the whole of life to come to the knowledge or the feeling of its value; these do not pay so dear a forfeit to their offended conscience and their despised God, but remain under the guidance of unrenewed nature and the sanction of worldly profit. But being once known and felt, coolly to reject this dispensation of law and grace is to commit a suicide upon the highest faculties of our nature and the highest hopes of our being. While to remain in voluntary ignorance of so sacred a treasure is attended with a barrenness and poverty of soul in the greater numbe[illegible] when some are found of a spontaneou[illegible]y are incident to many a [illegible]sion, unrelieved by any [illegible]nsolation which the

smile and sustenance of their good father would have afforded them. I know how boon Nature of her own self hath suggested deeds which blaze through dark ages like stars in the vault of night, and I know how bountiful a mother she is still in bearing sons and daughters strong in virtue and desirous of glory. But I know as well how "they come to their own, and their own acknowledge them not." Their nobler parts disqualify them for vulgar sympathies, and their nobler aims draw down upon them vulgar envies and evil speakings. Power, rude power, often strips their early blossoms, and nips in the bud a new and noble fruit which might have propagated its kind over the fertile earth; or they languish for want of kindred, like exiles upon a foreign shore, whose noble nature the barbarous people never know. Their devices are abortive, or drop still-born, or die immature for want of fostering care. In proof of which I might adduce the unhappy sons of genius, "fallen on evil days and evil tongues;" patriots crushed as rebels by arbitrary power; discoverers treated as innovators by calculating self-interest, and inventors, whose inventions have enriched thousands, perishing themselves of cold neglect. I might show how each of these stood in need, and suffered for the want, of some such aid and encouragement as the revealed constitution of God, which is a prop to the mind when all earthly succour hath failed, and an encouragement to good when all countenance of men is withdrawn.

I might show how every noble endowment of nature, and every form of virtuous pursuit is sustained in practice, and enhanced in our own esteem by this noble law of liberty. But this I consider to have been already done in the conclusion of the preceding Part, where was argued out its application to the noble parts of human nature; and in the opening of this Part, where was argued out its tendency, when adopted, to exalt and purify our conduct. Now, therefore, I would turn from the individual, and show how this our constitution of divine government would operate to the welfare of society at large.

This is a wide and difficult field, but one which by good management may be brought within bounds, and be made to exhibit in a most triumphant way the excellence of the divine constitution. The well-being of civil society is afflicted chiefly with two evils—the inactivity of some of her members, and the over activity of others—the stupor of one part, and the fever of another—sluggishness and discontent. In pursuing onwards its slow course to perfection, the political or civil state of man between these two evils is like a vessel which lags in her course from an excess of burden, or is driven out of it by an excess of wind and sail. There is a nice adjustment between the lethargy of the great masses of society which hold back, and the active restless spirits which move its condition forward. The one of these, this constitution of which we treat would stimulate into life, while it repressed

the other into moderation; and would thus bring out a broader, more secure impulse towards excellence over the parts of the political constitution.

The greater number of almost every state are sunk into a mere animal being, consuming food, propagating their kind, labouring the earth, manufacturing its commodities into various shapes, and transporting them from place to place. Few of whom remember that they are descended from the skies and instinct with ethereal being, or make account of their great Father in the heavens, or make arrangements for returning to him at length. Narrow life spanneth their hopes and expectations, the impure earth yieldeth them all their joy; their common intercourse is in idle talk, vain parade, vulgar jest, brutal excess, and savage sports. They thirst not after immortality, they live not for things above, they meditate not on things believed; there is no eternity in their thoughts, no control over their nature, save for the convenience or by the compulsion of society, no energy of their own accord after perfection, no grandeur of character, no godlike deeds, no everlasting honour or renown.

God doth know I would not misrepresent my fellow-creatures whom his hand hath formed in a common mould, or rudely discover the nakedness of their condition; but it irks the heart to contemplate the deep beds of degradation into which the masses and multitudes of mankind are found for want of the discipline wrought upon the heart by this constitution, which alone availeth to produce virtue, magnanimity, peace, and all the

finer fruits and conditions of the soul. I know not what fearful misgivings upon the sanity of human nature come over my mind when I behold the condition of unregenerate men, while I feel assured that there is in the religion disseminated abroad a power and faculty to raise them to the highest attainments of reflective and hopeful creatures. I feel as if the better part of man were writhing, like the camp of Israel when bitten of fiery serpents, under a deforming deadly disease, for which the specific, a thousand times approved, was brought before them, to their very hand; but through obstinacy, through a very love of misery and death, the infatuated people perished from present happiness and future hope.

Who can feel otherwise when he looks upon the most numerous class in every land, sunk into a brute-like contentment with food and raiment, the pasture and the housing of their separate conditions! Unreasoning, unenlightened, they live upon mere animal gratifications, drudging with cattle their weary life, or fulfilling in mechanical employments those offices which the five mechanical powers cannot be perfected to perform. They drudge, they refresh themselves for further drudgery; they sleep, and wake to drudgery again. Oh! it is unsightly to behold the immortal soul of man born and bred up to toil, toiling hard through wearisome years, untutored in truth, unfed from the fountain of intelligence, ignorant of the great salvation, and unsanctified by the Holy One, descending into the

grave at length, of God and of man all unknowing, and unknown. And, if possible, to sink their condition still lower, in this death of the intellectual and spiritual faculties of nature, all the animal and brutal passions come alive, run loose, and at times stir into fearful commotion the quiescence of their being. Their holydays are days of dissipation, their cups crowned with licentious and blasphemous talk, their raptures intoxication and brutal excess. For an instance of all which, I need go no further than this our boasted and beloved England, the land of brave and of free men, the bulwark of religion in the latter times, and that hath long been the refuge and asylum of the persecuted stranger. Yet by the very excess of their free and manly spirit, and the want of the fear of God, which is the only fear that can control the minds of English people, it hath come to pass, that they willingly degrade themselves into excesses into which foreign nations are not sunk by all their slavery. Our fairs are scenes of iniquity scandalous to be looked upon, our intemperance is proverbial over the world, our prize-fights a cruel game elsewhere never played at, our forgeries, our thefts, our murders not surpassed, if equalled, in the most barbarous climes. The innocent sports of our villages, for which weary labour was wont to relax himself, the cheer and contentment which blessed the interior of our cottages, the plenty and beauty which bloomed around their walls, home-bred comfort and cleanliness, with all the Arcadian features

of Old English life, live no longer, save in the tales of ancestry. Hard and incessant labour, broken with fierce gleams of jollity and debauch, poorhouse dependance and poorhouse discontent, nocturnal adventures of the poacher and the smuggler and the depredator, sabbath breakings, sabbath sports, and sabbath dissipations are now too much the characteristics of our city and our rustic people.

And yet our people are a noble stock, which with pruning will yield you excellent fruit, they are a rich soil that will grow you either a plentiful harvest of corn or a rank crop of weeds, according to the husbandry you give them. In the olden time, that husbandry was the social principle, which developed sweetly its power over human nature. The softening intercourse of ranks, the mutual respect between high and low, the devotion of servant to master, and the patriarchal affection of masters in return; the hearty intercourse between landlord and tenant, the open hearted hospitality of the great families, and their dwelling like angels of mercy and justice within their domains, serving out their stated doles to the poor of the country round, ministering justice and upholding popular rights in county court, and national assembly;—this culture of the social principle in all its roots and branches did soften the manners and cultivate the affections of the people, and produce that efflorescence of happy scenes, for which Old England was renowned. But alas! it liveth now

only in the tales of ancestry, and the vestiges of times gone by. And there is left a blank in the hearts of the lower classes of men which profane janglers about liberty would fill up with a spirit of sturdy and sullen independence, with claims of right and contempt of polite civilities towards superiors, of dutiful offices towards those in authority, and with every dissociating principle. These political feelings, which they are disseminating, are but a poor substitute for the antient social feeling, and can never be made by their single strength to regenerate a people.

Truly they do but babble about liberty and reformation, who think that the depressed condition of a people can be elevated to its proper place by political means alone. The perfection of civil polity is to defend, not to guide mankind; to defend each man from the intrusion of another upon his natural liberties, not to guide him how to act within that sacred sphere. Let us have, and, God be thanked! we have, such a constitution of civil law as will protect every man from the invasion of another. Give me now to boot something to guide each freeman of the realm in the exercise of his free and unmolested powers.—Give me something which may, among the various possibilities of action within his range, guide him to that which will enhance his own and the common weal.—Give me distinctions between good and ill, motives to the one and repressions from the other, checks against selfishness in small matters such as the law planteth in great ones; light to the conscience where it is perplexed,

sustenance where it is over tempted, calls to virtue unsolicited, consolation to virtue unrewarded. —Give me buoyancy to nature, aye in a sinking state, a balance for airy words, and a measure for invisible and unexpressed thought. These things it is not in the nature of any political constitution to yield, and for lack of this gift the creation groaneth and is in bondage, and human nature falleth into such deep and dark passes of misery.

The French and the German have their recourse in sentiment, and some classes of our own island have leaned to the same broken reed. But that sentiment to which they have betaken themselves is a spurious bastard, not the true offspring, of the heart; nor once to be compared to our own antient homely honesty, whereof the good and happy fruits have been delineated above. There is a truth in sentiment, and a loveliness in refined sentiment, but the sentiment broached of late abroad, and thence imported into some circles of rank and literature at home, is generally a substitute for sound and heartfelt principle, a law for the lips only, and even to words an indulgent law; and it has no more connexion in the practice of its votaries, with purity and chastity and undefiled honour, or even with common honesty between man and man, than the six books of Euclid have; and it never impinges even upon the ear of the lower classes, of whose renovation we at present treat; and therefore we dismiss it without further consideration.

The age of sentiment hath nearly passed away,

and education is now cried up as the great restorative of the sunken people. But education, or the capacity of acquiring knowledge being given, will avail little of itself, unless you have respect to the knowledge which is obtained. By education you give the power of informing the mind and the conscience, you do as it were couch the eye of the mind; you must moreover teach it to recognise the good from the evil in the new fields of vision, refraining it from looking upon scenes of evil and temptation, and guiding it towards those which are good. You open the way to all kinds of lettered company, and furnish the power of conversing with those who, being dead, still speak by printed books. But it is well known that books are, like the writers of books, good and evil, and may corrupt as well as reform those who have to do with them. Therefore it is not less dangerous to set a youth with money in his pocket loose and at large upon this city, than to set a man with the power of reading loose upon the great republic of letters. By reason of the new power he hath acquired he needeth new discretion in using it—the tree of knowledge still bearing both good and evil. While, therefore, with the education of letters we have no quarrel, but do, on the other hand, commend it as a great and powerful endowment, we altogether reject its claim to be a restorative to the lower classes of men. It doth only put restoration within their reach, and is therefore to be hailed by every well-wisher of his kind; but the

restoration must come from some other quarter, and depend upon the knowledge they acquire and the purposes to which they apply it.

The constitution described in the two last divisions of this argument, is alone equal to this restoration of the lower classes from their brutal apathy to what is noble, and their brutal excess in what is sensual. For, as we have seen, it addresseth every good and generous feeling within the breast, and prompts it into activity by every inducement. Then from the personal it proceeds to watch over the social principle, regulating all the relationships of life with tenderness and affection; planting love in families, mutual respect among the ranks of life, and disinterested attention to the well-being of all. It awakens spiritual tastes, and refreshes the mind with divine sentiments, and introduceth to virtuous company. It casteth a restraint upon every wicked propensity, and putteth a divine economy through all one's affairs; and by all these influences works over a community the most complete of all reformations. For what is a community but a number of fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, governors and governed? and if each of these is held to his office by a wise and powerful authority, made to love it and delight in it, what is wanting to the well-being of that community? Religion would also bring back with it all the social and generous virtues which once dwelt within the land, and restore the efflorescence of happiness which hath almost faded away. It

would wipe away the disgustful scenes into which their irrepressible freedom hurries the people. Sobriety and economy and domestic peace it would plant in the families of the most dejected. The industry of parents would thrive under the blessing of God and the expectation of everlasting rest. The children would be trained in the fear of God, the young men would be strong in self-command, the young maidens clothed in modesty and chastity and a divine gracefulness. Servants would be faithful and masters kind; and within every cottage of the land would be realized that bower of innocency and paradise of religious content, which our sorely-tried, and, alas! too yielding poet hath sung in his "Cottar's Saturday Night;" thereby redeeming half his frailties, and making the cause of religion his debtor—a debt, it seems to me, which the religious have little thought of in their persecution of his name, and cruel exposure of all his faults.

I consider the process by which the divine constitution dignifies all the parts of human nature, and all the performances of human life, to have been already explained in the conclusion of the last and the introduction to this division of our argument; but that this most important topic of our discourse may stand justified before experience no less than perception, I hold myself to show by three several instances, upon the largest, broadest scale, the perfect sufficiency of the divine constitution to regenerate the most benighted and the most brutalized of mankind.

Our first instance is taken from the origin and first plantation of our faith in the most luxurious and vicious quarters of the earth—Rome, Greece, Jerusalem and the Lesser Asia. Where it broke the bands of personal interest, and made men generous to the highest pitch of selling all they had, and pouring the price at the apostles' feet. It laid low and levelled the dear distinctions of rank and place, bringing the richest with the poorest, the highest with the lowest, to be served at the same tables and supported out of the same common purse. It nerved afresh the Corinthian dissolved in pleasure, humbled the towering pride of the Athenian, tamed the boldness of the warlike Roman, straightened the crooked ways of the cunning Asiatic, opened the selfish heart of the vain-glorious Jew, and knocked off the fetters of superstitious idolatry from them all, unscaling the darkened eye and restoring the abused mind of religion. In working which transformation it peacefully set fraud and opposition at naught, until it fairly overran the nations, and seated itself in the high places of their hearts, of their lives, and of their laws.

Our second instance is taken from the Reformation, when the divine constitution smote asunder religious and civil bonds, and emancipated many nations, as it were, by a single stride. In little more than the lifetime of a man, restoring England, Scotland, Holland, half of Germany, and the Scandinavian nations, to a free use of the faculty of thought, which ten centuries of cunning arts had been em-

ployed to shackle. The nations shook themselves as from a sleep; the barbarous, ferocious people took on piety and virtue and the sacred sense of human rights. The Hollander roused him from his torpid life amongst his many marshes, and beat the chivalry of haughty Spain from his shores, defeating the conqueror of a new world. The German burgher braved his emperor, though followed by half the nations, and won back his religious rights. The English, under their virgin queen, offered up the Armada, most glorious of navies, a sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts. And of my beloved native country—whose sufferings for more than a long century do place her in a station of honour second only to the Waldenses in the militant church, and whose martyrs (alas! that they should have been to Episcopal pride and Protestant intolerance!) will rank on the same file with those of Lyons and Alexandria in the primitive church—of her regeneration by the power of religion I can hardly trust myself to speak. Before that blessed æra she had no arts but the art of war; no philosophy; no literature, save her songs of love and chivalry; and little government of law. She was torn, and mangled with intestine feuds, enslaved to arbitrary or aristocratic power, in vassalage or in turbulence. Her soil niggard, her climate stern, a desert land of misty lakes and hoary mountains. Yet, no sooner did the breath of truth from the living oracles of God breathe over her, than the wilderness and the solitary place became glad, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose. The high-tempered soul of the nation—

the "*ingenium pervervidum Scotorum*"—which had roused itself heretofore to resist invasions of her sacred soil and spoil the invader's border, or to rear the front of rebellion and unloose warfare upon herself, did now arise for the cause of religion and liberty—for the rights of God and man. And, what a demonstration of magnanimity we made! The pastoral vales, and upland heaths, which of old were made melodious to the shepherd's lute, now rung responsive to the glory of God, attuned from the hearts of his persecuted saints. The blood of martyrs mingled with our running brooks; their hallowed bones now moulder in peace within their silent tombs, which are dressed by the reverential hands of the pious and patriotic people. And their blood did not cry in vain to heaven for vengeance. Their persecutors were despoiled; that guilty race of kings were made vagabonds upon the earth. The church arose in her purity like a bride decked for the bridegroom; religious principles chose to reside within the troubled land; bringing moral virtues in their train, and begetting a national character for knowledge, industry, enterprise, every domestic and public virtue, which maketh her children an acceptable people in the four quarters of the earth.

Our third instance of the power dwelling in the divine constitution to renovate a people and make them great and good, is taken from the present times, and may be seen in almost every missionary station on the earth. The missionaries, who are the apostles and true dignitaries of the modern church, have addressed their undertaking to the

lowest and most degraded of their species, the West-Indian slave, who is bought and sold and fed for labour, and differeth only from the ox in that he is not stalled for the butcher's knife; the Greenlanders, in whose misnamed region the green of nature doth rarely bloom; the treacherous islanders of the South Seas; the Hottentots, whose name hath grown proverbial as the extreme limit of ignorance.—Now I speak to the dispassioned and well-informed, not to self-sufficient bigots who will not stoop to peruse the narratives of such low-bred men, nor degrade themselves to turn the eye from magazines of wit and fashion to the magazines of methodism and religion,—I speak to honest-hearted men who love the improvement of their species however promoted, and crave of their justice to acknowledge how the constitution of divine truth, when adopted by these rudest people, hath brought out the thinking and the feeling man from the human animal, as pure metal is brought out of the earthy ore, as pearly honey droppeth from the waxen comb—the souls of the converts became peopled with a host of new thoughts and affections, and the missionary village with a hive of industrious, moral, and peaceful citizens, dwelling in the surrounding wastes of idolatry and wickedness, like the Tabernacle of God in the wilderness of Sin. The missionaries have come into contact with the high places of power, and reformed the palace of the king, and pacified the spirit of warriors, and made bloodshed to cease. Also, in our colonies, the planters, whom long residence among slaves had dispossessed of British spirit, have come

at length to acknowledge the humble missionary, and honour him for the sake of the good fruits of his labours. So that, as in the first ages, this constitution which God hath given to the earth is still continuing to advance its subjects into a new sphere of being, from the animal to the spiritual, to disarm the opposition of its foes and to triumph peaceably over the earth.

That religion, pure and undefiled, if brought into the same contact with the ignorant and degraded classes of our country would work the same humanizing and dignifying effects, we do therefore consider as established by the prior and posterior methods of proof, from the nature of the thing and the frequent experience of the fact. Now in those three instances there is every degree and form of human society which the world hath seen. The refined luxury of the classical, the feudal wildness of the Gothic, the darkness and ferocity of the savage, are all brought under, pacified, and ameliorated by the spiritual arts of the divine government. And if there remain any one so unreasonable as still to misgive of its prevailing equally against the abounding ignorance and iniquity of our lower classes, I have the very fact to appeal to, the successful experiment in the hands of the Wesleyan Methodists. They have grappled with the most irreducible case of the problem, and fairly resolved it. Not in England—perhaps not in the wide world—was there a more ignorant, dissipated, and ferocious people than the colliers of the West and the North, to whom the Wesleyans

addressed the Gospel of Christ with the most distinguished success; in every case working a reformation upon the individuals who joined themselves to their communion. And not only amongst them have they succeeded, but amongst the lower classes, in general, through all the varied conditions of their life, and all the varied aspects of their ignorance.

From this topic of society's degraded and quiescent members, I should now pass to the next of society's over-active and destructive members, but I crave the liberty of one short digression. I would consider the means of ameliorating the condition of men, which are now engaging the speculation and endeavour of various well-informed and well-intentioned classes of the community.

Almost all the high genius and enterprise of this age, at home and abroad, calculate that these effects, which we claim for divine government, will result from political reformations; and they have drawn after them the sympathies of by far the most disinterested part of our nation; with whom the watchword of domestic and foreign renovation is, Well-balanced and well-administered political institutions. Now, from all I can understand and learn of the nature of civil polity, it will stretch no farther than to protect and defend us in our several rights; and, when it would enter farther in to take an oversight of our private, our domestic, our personal conduct, it then becomes tyranny. Why, then, should there be any dispute between us and the politicians?—or why should they scowl on us and we look scowling

back on them? Let them mind the out-works and defences of each man's encampment, guard the craft of priests and the power of governors from coming in to molest it; we will, in the mean time, set all things in order within the poor man's cottage, which their good endeavours have made to be revered as "the poor man's castle." Let them keep the "king from daring to enter it;" we will endeavour to keep the devil from daring to enter it. And in our turn we will do them as good a service as they have done us; for we will touch the lethargic bosoms of the sluggish people with the Promethean spark of religion, which persecution and power cannot quench, and which will light and feed the lamp of freedom when need be. We will give them a people fearful of no one save God, armed in religion and virtue, which alone are incorruptible by the bribes, reckless of the power, and more terrible to the measures of wicked governors, than an army with banners:—a people who will stand for liberty on the earth, and shape themselves for glory in heaven. And we will satisfy the legislators no less than the reformers; we will give them a people obedient to wholesome laws, and examples of peaceable conduct to all around, but as refractory against conscientious bonds or arbitrary measures as the Puritans and Covenanters were of old. And we will satisfy the economists no less; for we will give them a people industrious upon principle, independent upon principle, and who will refrain their natural instincts rather than cover a country with pauperism and with misery.

Why, then, should these several schools of national well-being separate from the Christians, and aim their darts askance at the integrity of our intentions and the usefulness of our work? They have instruments, and we have an instrument. Our instrument is for laying the foundation, their's is for ornamenting the structure. They work upon the outside, to keep off enemies at a distance; we work within the house, to keep the peace at home, to sustain the affections, and to promote industry. When dissension cometh to a height, we call in their powerful aid; while all is doing well they have no occasion and should not wish to interfere. Therefore, I say, let there be peace and fraternity and mutual esteem amongst us, if we be honestly set upon the common weal.

For the enemy taketh much profit from our disunion, to injure us both. You are not the noble men your fathers were when the foundations of English freedom were laid. Then you were men of might, because you feared the living God and did your endeavour to serve him. Now you are men soured in spirit and often stained in reputation, in your zeal for liberty trampling often upon the virtues and decencies of life. Those have intruded themselves among you, and got the reins of the people, whom your ancestors would not have allowed to tie the latchet of their shoe, nor to be the porter of the most outward gate of their domains; and your whole cause, however good it be in itself, hath fallen into contempt, from the vagrant band of advocates who now beard

you in the assemblies where you antiently reigned. And we Christians have suffered no less from the dismemberment; we have lost the manly regard of our fathers for liberty and good government, and crouched into slavish sentiments of passive obedience, as if we were stooping the neck of our understanding, in order that they might by-and-by wreathe the chain upon our bodies, or make us the instrument of wreathing it on others. Oh, how we are fallen from the days of the glorious Reformation! There is no magnanimous assertion of principles; there is a base desertion of those who assert them. All the glory of the church is gone; and I wonder not that the free-minded laymen hate and spurn the slavishness of our sentiments.

But, by the spirits of our great fathers in church and state! are we never again to see the reunion of religious and free-born men? Is there to be no city of refuge, no home, no fellowship of kindred for one who dares to entertain within his breast these two noblest sentiments—freedom and religion? Is he aye to be thus an outcast from the pious, who neglect all political administrations, except when they touch sectarian pride, or invade churchman's prerogative? Is he aye to be an outcast from the generous favourers of their country's weal, who have foregone, in a great degree, the noble virtues and christian graces of the old English patriarchs of church and state; and taken in their private character more of the manners and libertinism of continental revolutionists,

and have little left of the antient blood of these islanders?

But if England would make another step in advance, she must look to the strength in which she made her former steps; and if foreign nations would possess the blessings of England, they must look to that era of her history, when her liberty struggled into light. Religion set the work in motion, and religious men bore the brunt of the labour. The Puritans and the Covenanters were the fathers of liberty; the Cavaliers and the Politicians would have been its death. So was it also among the Huguenots of France, in whose massacre the star of liberty set to that ill-fated land, and cannot rise again for want of such men as Condé and Coligné. So also in the United Provinces of Holland, and every country in which liberty hath had any seat. Nevertheless, every religious man must wish well to the present shaking of the nations, as likely to open passages for the light of truth, which heretofore the craft of priests and the power of absolute tyrants have diligently excluded. I pray to heaven constantly, night and morning, that he would raise up in this day men of the antient mould, who could join in their antient wedlock these two helps meet for each other, which are in this age divorced—religion and liberty. As it goes at present, a man who cherishes these two affections within his breast hardly knoweth whither to betake himself:—not to the pious, for they have forsworn all interest or

regard in civil affairs; not to the schools of politicians, who with almost one consent have cast off the manly virtues and christian graces of the old English reformers. But, by the spirits of our fathers! I ask again, are their children never to see the reunion of religious and free-born men? Have our hearts waxed narrow that they cannot contain both of these noble affections? or, hath God removed his grace from us—from those who consult for freedom, in order to punish their idolatry of liberty, and demonstrate into what degradation of party-serving and self-seeking this boasted liberty will bring men, when it is loosed from the fear of God, who is the only patron of equity and good government. But, why, O Lord! dost thou remove thy light from thine own people, the pious of the land? Is it that they may know thou art the God of wisdom no less than of zeal, who requirest the worship of the mind no less than of the heart? Then do thou after thine antient loving-kindness send forth amongst them a spirit of power and of a sound mind, that they may consult for the public welfare of this thine antient realm, and infuse their pure principles into both its civil and religious concerns.

It seems to my mind, likewise, when I compare the writings of these patriarchs of church and state with the irreverent and fiery speculations of modern politicians, and the monotonous, unimaginative dogmatizings of modern saints, that the soul of this country hath suffered loss, and become sterile from the disunion of these two spouses,

religion and liberty; and that the vigour of political and religious thoughts hath declined away. There is no nourishment to a righteous breast in the one class, and in the other there is no nourishment to a manly breast; and until harmony between these two be joined, we never shall enjoy such an offspring of mind as formerly was produced in this land to beget its likeness in every heart. When I read the "Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," the most powerful, it seems to me, of all compositions, antient or modern, and over against it set the "Descent of Liberty, a Mask," and such like works of modern reformers—when I read the "Letters for Toleration," or the Treatises on Government of Locke and Sydney, and over against them set the Defences and Apologies of moderns persecuted for conscience' sake (or, as they phrase it, for blasphemy's sake), I seem to be conversing with creatures of a different sphere in creation. Nor do I feel the element less altered upon me when I pass from the "Ecclesiastical Polity" to any modern treatises or eulogies upon the church; or from the "Saint's Rest" to any modern work of practical piety. The grandeur of religious subjects is fallen; the piety of political subjects is altogether deceased. We are mere pigmies in the moral applications of intellect. The discrimination of the age is led astray or fallen asleep, and maketh more account of the most petty novice or student in art or science, of the interpreter of an Egyptian hieroglyphic, or the discoverer of a new Oasis in the great desert of Zaara, than

it would, I verily believe, of the greatest sage of moralist, if there was any chance of such a phenomenon arising, in this physical age.

On every account, therefore, of the common weal, both for awakening a spirit in the lethargic part of the people, and of purifying that yeasty spirit which at present exists for reformation, and overruling it to good and wholesome ends; also for regenerating the taste of both the political and religious; I present the constitution of divine government, which hath approved itself in all ages so efficacious. And now I return from this digression, to consider how it regulates the fiery parts of the social constitution, which are ever striving to set it in a blaze.

In meditating upon those revolutions which disturb the peace and prosperity of civil society, and bring on seasons of anarchy or listlessness, during which some upstart tyrant wreathes the chain of slavery round the neck of a gallant nation; they seem to me to spring first of all out of that brutal indifference of the great mass of the people from which we have already shown the way of deliverance. They lie grovelling like cattle in their thoughtless and ignorant and improvident condition, of which the governing powers are constantly taking advantage to aggrandize themselves, until at length a season arrives when the animal nature can endure no longer its privations, and arises under a blind instinct of self-deliverance to remedy its aggravated and long-endured wrongs. Meanwhile some proud, ambitious, dis-

contented spirits above, or some great and noble spirits below who shared in the dejection and misery of their condition, suffering in a stern meditation of revenge, arise in the hour of convulsion, and give to this terrible strength and ungovernable irritation of the mass a savage direction, which tears up human society almost by the very roots. We have already pointed to the cure of that brutal apathy of the people which is the root of the mischief, and showed the means by which their soul may be kept enlightened and speculative, their heart tender and strong, their wills under regency of God and conscience. A people so disciplined are not only invincible by the brute force of tyranny, (as every blow of the blessed Reformation proveth), but they are sharp-sighted to the rules of policy, and not easily won upon by the false representations of faction. There is a divine contentment with their condition, and a divine endeavour to fill it well, which will not be disturbed by any vain theories; but, when disturbed in very truth, then woe to him upon whom the wounded conscience of the people dealeth its blows, and the vial of the wrath of God, for his saints' sakes, descendeth from above.

Now if we can show in our system as good a cure for the factious and restless spirits which are ever generated in the bosom of a community, and ever irritating its peace under one disguise or another, sometimes of declaration for civil rights, sometimes of enthusiasm for new schemes of reformation, and at other times of fanaticism for

religion, we shall have secured the common weal upon two sides; first, strengthening the constitution itself, and, secondly, removing the local inflammations and disorders with which it is troubled; and we shall have reason to think this argument for the divine constitution, *upon political grounds*, brought to a happy issue. This we shall do by patiently examining into the causes which breed such discontented and irritable spirits, who are always endeavouring to lead the people astray.

Now it has been my lot, in mingling with the various classes of this suffering world, to find one most fertile source of this disturbance and discontent, in the disagreement between the capacities of a man, and the condition to which Providence seemeth to have fixed him down. Some, with most capacious minds, I have seen forced to grind like Sampson in the mill of a haughty and imperious lord; others, with great and generous hearts, oppressed by cold poverty, or forced to hang upon common charity; the ambition of others I have seen land-locked and idle; the intellect of others exhausted upon rustic inventions; the wit of others upon winter-evening tales; beauty blushing unseen, modesty uncared for; and royal virtues held in no repute: all which their ill-assorted lots did cost the people dear, and begat most indigestible and irritating humours. The mind seemed as in a cage of confining conditions, within whose narrow bounds it spent an unprofitable strength, it pined like a proud man in prison, or raged like a strong man in fetters. By-

and-bye these towering faculties, which in youth made such efforts to rise into their proper element, growing weary of the vain endeavour, have fallen into despair, and become content to think and feel and speak and act like the multitude around; or else they have become deadly and revengeful, sour and sullen towards the forms of life which did impede their progress, holding a constant argument and living in a constant warfare against the good institutions of men, and endeavouring their little ability to overthrow them. Thus a noble and ethereal spirit, which God lighted with heavenly fire to enlighten others, hath been quenched by the noxious vapours which exhaled from its neighbourhood, or hath turned into a firebrand to set the earth in a blaze. This is a great evil under the sun, and the most constant source of internal trouble to a state; a gangrene, which, being wide spread, corrupts the whole constitution.

And it has also been my lot to see it so spread, to live and move amongst a whole people infected with this malady of their condition, and not knowing how to be delivered from it. They were restless, and found no peace in the bosom of their homes. They went unrefreshed by the rest of night to their hated labours, and they retired from them only to murmur aloud; they looked hard upon your better raiment; their words lost the soft tones of kindness and respect, and you felt as in an enemy's country, or amongst the people of a house which hated the house of your fathers.

These inquietudes of the soul of man, and of the ranks of society, with their several allotments in the field of human life, are to a reflecting mind almost as distressing as the sluggish, brute-like contentment with the food and raiment which we treated of above; and in time produce those awful convulsions and insurrections, those hot and fiery contests, which society makes when, unmoored from their settlements, her ranks justle and crash like stately vesssels in a storm.

And if we turn to see how society fares at the other extreme; if there be a better assortment of the mind to its place, more contentment of the ranks with their several stations, and if what contentment there is do rest upon nobler gratifications than those which we deplored in humble life; then, from all we can see and learn in that quarter, things are not mended much. There is still unrest and dispeace in the bosom of youth, which they seek to allay in the dissipations of elevated life. They compete for the eye of woman; they compete for the pink of fashion; they even strive for the distinction of being vulgar and coarse; they compete for places in the senate-house; they range the world over for sights and shows; thus by the farness and wildness of their flights, through the amplitude of their range, displaying that same restlessness in their present estate, which the humbler youth doth by his flutterings around his narrow confines. And when this misdirected energy of soul becomes exhausted, they sink down into a repose often as unintellectual

and unspiritual as that we lamented among the labourers of life. For I reckon the vanity-fair of a Sabbath in the Park, or the entertainment of a route, or the triumph of an election, or the morality of a fox-chase or a horse-race, to be grounds of contentment, to an intellectual, immortal being, as disgraceful and pitiful as the glory of an ale-house, or the enjoyment of a fair, or the grand entertainment of a human fight.

Now, if I settle myself between these two extremes of humanity, and take an observation of the middle orders of men, then this I often find—that the souls of many have died a natural death among the common-places and every day engagements of the world—they rise and eat, and labour and go to sleep, and rise again to the same unintellectual round; and so they see the bustling faces of friends, prate of news, and now and then enjoy some social cheer—they care and know for little besides. This also I find, that others are restless after gain, and vexed from morning to night with endeavours to obtain it and to keep it; and, having succeeded, grow mighty and wax ambitious, seeking titles and honours; which having got, they become insufferably important; while I find many youths sweating and sweltering in the midst of labour, and for entertainment to their souls, seeking mirth and jollity, and other dangerous levities.

This dissatisfaction of the mind with its surrounding conditions, and these wretched refuges of contentment into which it settles down at

length, are, it seems to me, the chief causes of society's troubles; which are not to be effectually removed, unless you can find employment for this excessive activity, which is wasted in restless schemes, and find solace for this bitterness of the soul which these unsuccessful schemes engender. Which I shall discover at large out of those divine revelations, whose excellence we endeavour to disclose.

The example of our Saviour, born in meanest estate, and showing the glory of the Father through weeds of poverty and in scenes of contempt, must take off from all his disciples the edge and bitterness of envy, and teach them that the capacities of the most highly endowed mind have room and verge enough within the most mechanical callings; while the same example exhibits and enforces the true way to dignify the callings and the characters of men, and enable them to sit down with a high and noble contentment, which every thing may invade but nothing shall prevail against.

In order to know how little station is necessary to dignity and usefulness, Christians have only to remark the words which the angel of the Lord's birth spake to the shepherds who kept the night-watch over their flocks—"To you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He to whom prophets had been pointing since the fall of man as the great hope of all the earth; whom, in the sore distresses that threatened all the interests of righteousness and piety, the

seers had descried afar off, and called upon the hopeless people to take heart and be glad, for a light was coming to enlighten the Gentiles and glorify the people of Israel—hath at length arrived, and the messenger of the Lord descends to announce it to the earth, and guide these peasantry to the place of his birth. "In Bethlehem, the city of David, ye shall find him; and by this sign ye shall recognise him—ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger." It was sufficient to denote him that he was surely the worst accommodated babe that night in Bethlehem—I might say in the civilized world:—"The meanest, that is he." Why was the Saviour of the world born and reared so meanly? He whose endowments were uncommunicated and incommunicable, his work most honourable and pure; why was he born amongst the common herd of men—the vile and vulgar mob, as they are termed and treated? The counsellor who had within him that boundless ocean of wisdom, whereof all that hath inhered in man is but the bountiful overflowings—why was He not in high seats of learning to train the youth, or in seats of awful justice to rule with equity the people? The great and mighty Lord, who had within him that almighty power and strength, whereof the pillars of the universe are but a temporary scaffolding reared by a word of his mouth, and by a word of his mouth to be overturned again—Why was he not placed in the seat of universal empire, to do his sovereign will among the sons of men, and reduce them to happiness and

good order? These questions may well be asked upon beholding him swathed up amongst the cribs and provender of cattle; hedged in his life long, with mean and mechanical conditions, possessed of no power and honoured by no office, pinched in liberty of speech and action, the few years he was allowed to live. Yet it pleased the Lord that in him should all fullness dwell. Such was the Being, and such was the condition into which the Being was born, whom all Christians call their Master, and to whom all subjects of the divine constitution endeavour to conform their sentiments and life.

Now, if Christ, having such poor instruments to work his work withal, so little power and rank and wealth, did yet bear with meekness the imprisonment of his faculties, and look without envy upon the towering height of mean and despicable men—finding within his bosom a resting-place of peace, in the world a constant field of active well-doing, in the bosom of God a constant welcome, and in the prospects after his heavy office was well discharged an everlasting feast of hope,—may not we mortal, erring men, be glad to fulfil the will of God in whatever condition he may please to place us, and win to ourselves out of the saddest aspects and in the humblest allotments of human life, not only endurance and contentment, but the high engagements of a most useful life? Can poverty or bonds imprison the faculties of the religious soul—can ruin seize the conditions which Christ's most precious blood hath purchased for his people—can adversity benight the recon-

biled countenance of God? Cannot devotion soar as free from dungeons as from gorgeous temples? and will not the mite of misery be as welcome as the costly offerings of grandeur? Nay, verily, but the very humility and poverty of his people are their commendation to God, their necessities are their passport, their groans are their petitions, and their afflictions are their arguments.

When, therefore, there are found, in abject poverty, spirits of passing excellence struggling with their depression, and unable to extricate their genius! or their enterprise from petty embarrassments, from which they think a little more of wealth or a little more of station would have set them free without a struggle, let them turn into that vocation to which Christ invoketh men, and apply their faculties to those uses to which Christ applied his; then shall their soul be as tranquil, though overflowed with many waters, as was his, and their end as triumphant over this paltry world, and their spirit as liberally enlarged into glorious liberty. And though there be on every side of us grovelling spirits sleeping in the bosom of every advantage, disregarding the fairest occasions of honour and of good, and when they do intermeddle in affairs, spoiling every thing they undertake with the stain of their own meanness; what is there in this to stir our envy? in the eye of reason they are degraded and disgraceful, however prominent in the eye of silly people; in the eye of God they are condemned for profligate squanderers of his good and gracious gifts; and they are ripening

their blossoms for such a wintry blast as shall sear and waste and desolate them for ever. Poor men! their case is pitiful, passing pitiful. Be gracious to them, be full of prayer for them; for they pass like the flower of the grass, which flourisheth in the morning and in the evening is cut down, and the place which now knows them shall soon know them no more. Oh! it chaseth away for ever all repinings from the Christian's soul, to behold the discrepancy between the Saviour's divine capacities and the Saviour's humble lot; and it teacheth him resignation to his fortunes, and contentment in the midst of them, not out of a slothful and indolent spirit, but out of the conviction that from the worst fortune a life of the greatest activity and gainfulness may be made to arise. The sun never ariseth so glorious as when he divideth the thick clouds of the morning, and looketh forth from his pavilion of thick waters round about him; nor does man ever bespeak so much his spiritual strength, or show so like to God, as when he rejoiceth with a serene joy over darkness and trouble, and gathers sweet refreshment to his glory from the clouds which overcast him.

It is not sluggish contentment I advocate; I would rather see a man wrestle against his lot than miserably succumb, rise rampant and shake from him the thongs and whips that scourge him, take arms and perish like a man, than whine and weep under inglorious bonds. It is victory and triumph, no pitiable debasement, I contend for; and while I shut out material tools to express your mind and

will before the beholding world, I hand you spiritual tools to express it with, before all-beholding God, your own conscious soul, and the innumerable host of heaven. If you have a capacious mind, but no books nor school to train it in, nor theatre of high debate to display it before, then be it between you and God, and those whom he hath placed about you. Be the book of God your hand-book, and the universe of God your eye-book, and the providence of God your book of problems to be resolved; and be your own soul, your family, your friends, every ear which listens—the theatre before which to demonstrate your knowledge; this is amplitude enough. Is your heart generous and pitiful, but forced by niggard fortune to confine itself within narrow bounds of well-doing? then there is the generosity of feeling and of utterance; there is a kind word and a good counsel, which the wretched need as much, but seldomer receive, than an alms. Feel no envy; that is generous: indulge no malice; that is gracious: study no revenge; that is bountiful: it was thus that Christ testified that passing generosity of spirit which hath made him the boast of manhood. I suppose he gave less, because he had less to give, than many amongst ourselves; but he gave a volume of wise counsel, and bequeathed a treasure of good feeling which is now esteemed the most precious jewel this world contains within its orb. Do you say your noble ambitions are landlocked and idle by reason of hopelessness—is there no field for ambition in being a wise, good, and glorious creature, after

God's own image renewed? is there no hope of conquering sin, misfortune, death, and the grave? of rising to honour, glory, and immortality? Till there be midnight darkness in these avenues and outlets of the soul, tell me not of hopelessness, of landlocked and idle ambition. Doth your wit rust like a sword hanging in its sheath? then, though I have no outlet for that species of wit which they call droll and comical, and which finds its feast in farces and caricatures, in obscuring and distorting truth—yet for that true wit which lies in exposing affectation and vice, and unveiling the subterfuges of self-deceived nature, and holding the true mirror up to man that he may know himself, and knowing himself be ashamed—that wit which lies in dressing truth and excellency in proper images, and brings God into view through clouds and darkness, that we may flee to his mercy and forgiveness, and love his image—for such wit there is abundant outlet; for that is the very highest office which a Christian can perform for himself or his friend. And for that higher vein of genius which seeks its way in poetry and song—there are to be exhibited all the attributes of God, and life of christian virtue, and peace and joy in believing, and everlasting freedom from thraldom and impediment.

These, these are the proper excursions for the faculties of man into the provinces of God's holy nature and righteous ways; these console the spirit that delights itself therein, and treat it with a feast sweeter than honey and the honeycomb,

and replenish it with a treasure more valuable than the mines of the east. And these regions of thought and activity are open as the gates of the morning, and free as the liberty of thought itself. Rank hath no preference here; fortune brings no accession hither; a sceptre is no advancement; and a library of learning proves often cumbrous. Therefore be encouraged to put forth each man his mind, and spirit, and will, in these highways of thought and business. And the Lord as ye advance will open wide the gates of liberty, until at length death shall knock off the fetters of the mind, to become free and moveable as the angels of God.

I wish I had a dwelling-place in every bosom, and could converse with every faculty of man, that I had an ear to hear their murmurings, their sighings, their groanings, and all their separate griefs; and I wish that I had a faculty to understand all the parts and kindly offices of religion, which in this present age seemeth to be in bonds and to want enlargement; then would I draw near to every repining, grieving, hampered faculty of every spirit, and out of my spiritual guide I would sing over it a soft and soothing strain, sweetly set to its melancholy mood and aptly fitted to its present infirmity, until each languishing part of human nature should be refreshed, and peace should come, and blushing health arise, and glowing strength spring up hastily, and, like a strong man from sleep, or a giant refreshed with wine, the whole soul should

recover a divine strength, and push onwards to perfection heartily and happily with the full consent of all her powers. But no man can get such a faculty of drawing the distressed parts of fallen nature into an acquaintance with the healing, strengthening medicines of the Gospel of peace. Yet is there one to whom this happy function appertaineth, the Holy Spirit of God, whose unction is to the soul what light and food, and balmy sleep are to the body of man; and whose unspeakable comfort and unwearied strength we may every one partake of, seeing God longeth, loveth to pour it forth more affectionately than a father doth to give bread to his starving child.

Then, then arise, arise, ye sons of depression and misfortune, arise from your lowly beds, arise from your sinful conditions, burst asunder the confinements of a narrow lot; cease from brooding griefs, severe complainings, and every disquieting thought; join fellowship with the great comforter of this afflicted world, even the Spirit of Truth, who from the lowest pass of misery will raise you to a height of heavenly temper, and all the universe shall smile in the eye of your recovered joy, and the most discordant adversities of life become full of a divine wisdom and order. What hath the meanest cottager to fear, what the most laborious workman to complain of, when possessed of this divine companion, who shall unravel this fitful dream of existence, and show it to be a dispensation of God full of mercies and of comforts. And the Scriptures which furnish his

cottage will be in stead of palace ornaments and noble visitants, and furnish a better code to guide him than the formulary of any court; and his joys and sorrows awake as deep an interest in the mind of our common Father as those of royalty; and the incidents and changes and catastrophes of his cottage scenes are as well recorded in the book of God's remembrance as the transactions of an empire; and he hath the faculty of extracting honey from the bitterest weed in his humble field of existence; and though the bed of his distress may be dark, lonely, and unattended, the bosom of his Redeemer is his pillow, and the shadow of his wings his covert; and angels that have not fallen beckon him to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

Upon these unremoveable foundations the divine constitution placeth the contentment of every rank, high and low, and into these undebarred avenues of activity it calleth the awakened spirits of every man. There is room enough in all vocations for the display of every natural faculty and superadded grace, and in every vocation hath the arch enemy reared up a fabric of delusion against the Most High; to overturn which, and raze it to the foundation, and on its ruins erect the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope, is work and honour enough for the longest lifetime and the largest faculties, aided and directed by the Spirit of God.

If men were under the influence of these prin-

ciples, which are but a scantling of the whole, those grievances of the various ranks of life, which we set forth as the chief irritation of society, would cease. The miserable man of whom we spoke, into whose enjoyment discontent hath eaten like a canker, and who, oppressed with evil conditions, hath no more nerve for life, but bitterly makes his moan to the ear of solitude, and singeth sadly of departed hope and miserable fortune—to him the Comforter would come, and take him into his kindly embrace, and whisper into his ear softening and soothing speeches, telling him of life beyond the grave, where there is no sighing nor weeping nor any grief—of a Father in heaven, who watcheth over him by night and day—of a shepherd that will feed him by the still waters, and of things unutterable which await him in his Father's house. The imprisoned sympathies of the woful man being thus enlarged and satisfied out of the abundance of heavenly food, he walks abroad satisfied with himself and with his condition, loving his brethren of men whom he lately disreputed, and acting stoutly his worthy part in that bustling scene which lately thronged upon his memory a thousand antient disappointments, but which now brightens with a thousand hopes, and is sweetened with a thousand wholesome uses.

And again, that brutal man, of whom we told, who hath his pleasure in sensual and riotous scenes, living content with mere animal gratification, unreasonable, unspiritual, unenlightened, drudging with cattle his weary life, feeding himself

for mere drudgery, and caring for nothing beyond—to him the Comforter would come, and teach him how to become a man—a son of immortality; awaken spiritual tastes, introduce him to spiritual people, make him a husband and a father from being a regardless man, and teach him to keep at home instead of being a vagabond upon the earth.

And again, that plodding man, whose contentment with the daily routine of business we blamed—and that scheming man, whose ambition to climb through wealth to place and power, we set forth—and that toiling youth, whose miserable reliefs and refreshments in dangerous gaieties we pitied—all these forms of active man the Comforter would mightily improve and refine; touching the spiritless drudge with a wand of power that would quicken him into a thoughtful and a spiritual man, and draw him into converse with God and communion with heaven; teaching the schemer to scheme for eternity, and making him ambitious of all heavenly accomplishments; thrilling the soul of the youth with love for Christ and his christian vocation—enlivening the conscience of all to a thousand new perceptions of duty and usefulness, and filling the soul with a constant fund of devotion and peace.

Finally, those of high birth and fortune, who pass through a vain, hot, unbridled youth, to settle down into a manhood of worldly ambition and display, this divine Comforter would catch and timeously defend from the snare of fashion and folly, and when pleasure sets forth her most

delicious baits, and treat succeeded treat in well-studied succession, when by luxury and beauty the pulse of life is raised, and by congenial sentiment and song the heart is kept in unison and the fancy dazzled by the finest creations of genius —all to win favour for most unholy practices, then, in that most trying moment, the guardian Spirit of God would spread the sober shades of truth over the tempting scene, and raise up a brighter creation out of the promises of God to out-tempt the tempter, and he would fill it with the beauty of angelic forms, with the feast and fatness of God's house, and the raptures of his ravished people, and so preserving the youth uncorrupted, lead him into settled manhood, and make him a man great in well-doing, the patron of good works, an honour to this name, and the boast of the country round.

Thus, truly, it would fare with all conditions, if they would take up the pattern of Christ and imbibe his Spirit; and thus would the ills of every condition be treated, and men live happy and die peaceful and enter into everlasting habitations.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART V.

PRELIMINARIES OF THE SOLEMN JUDGMENT.

The Almighty Governor of heaven and earth, having such claims upon the human race and such a regard for their well-being, as we set forth in the first head of this argument, did accord to the wants and welfare of human nature that constitution of laws whereof we have unfolded the principles, and the excellent adaptation both to the individual and the social state of man. Having done so much, he might have left it to make way upon the strength of its own merits, without any further recommendation than its present fitness and advantage: in which case he would have stood to us in the relation of a counsellor who points out the good and evil of conduct, and the way to reach tranquillity and happiness; or of a father, who, before he departs, bequeathes to his children the legacy of his wisdom and affection. Even so, God, having revealed his best counsels to the sons of men, might have retired within the veil and left all beyond the grave secret and unknown.

But perceiving in us such contumacious neglect of himself and of all that he could do for our sakes, and such base preference of sensual and

temporary interests over spiritual and eternal, he hath appointed a day in which he will call an account of the good and the evil, and make a grand and notable decision between those who regarded him and those who regarded him not. For he hath too tender an interest in that which is good, not to sustain it by every means; while for that which is evil he hath too great an abhorrence to keep its direful consequences secret: therefore, it hath pleased him to lift up the veil of death and the grave, and show the spectacle of eternal judgment and the separate issues of obeying and disobeying his revealed law.

Frequent descriptions are given of this judgment in the Scriptures, and allusions to it are ever recurring throughout the preaching of Christ and of the Apostles. It is used to arrest the fears of the wicked, and to rejoice the patience of the righteous. To escape the wrath to come, is the ground upon which all men are commanded to repent and to believe in Christ, who came into the world that men might not perish, but have everlasting life. By this institution of judgment, God hath superinduced, upon the affectionateness of the father and the kindness of the counsellor, the authority of the lawgiver and governor; and his revelations, from being admonitions and exhortations, pass into the severe character of laws which it is perilous to disobey. All that hath been hitherto propounded of their good consequences must therefore be regarded, not as acts of judgment so much, as natural effects flowing from their

obedience. We come now to the awful exercise of Almighty judgment, having hitherto treated only of his exquisite wisdom, his long-suffering, mercy, and his most abundant kindness.

Now, though this be a subject of pure revelation, it is one which may be handled with great deference to human reason and to our natural sentiments of justice; and therefore we solicit, as formerly, from our reader, a lively exercise of all his faculties, and a ready proposal of all his doubts; our object being not to overawe him with terrific descriptions of things unseen, in which imagination may at liberty disport, but to convince him how consonant things revealed are to the best sentiments and interests of mankind. We have seen how exquisitely God hath accorded his law to the honour and advantage of man, and he may therefore be expected to accord the judgment thereof no less exquisitely to our sentiments of justice and equity; for we take it to be a first principle of every communication from a wise and good God, that it should have something in it for the advantage of the creature to whom it is made: and, accordingly, we hope to make it appear that God doth not preserve his dignity at the expense of his justice, or wield his authority at the expense of his mercy, but consulteth for all his noble attributes equally and alike; in every action making their combined lustre to shine forth.

In order, therefore, to carry the reason of men along with us into this solemn subject of Judgment to come, we shall consider the doubts and

difficulties which the mind hath in meditating the transactions of the great day, and endeavour to render the best resolution of them in our power, before entering upon the very article of the judgment and the principles upon which it proceeds. These preliminary doubts and hesitations are of two classes; one arising from the difficulties of conception, the other arising from our love of justice.

The first class to which we shall give immediate attention, springs from ruminating upon the magnitude of the work to be performed, and the incredible multitude to be judged. When we would grapple with the subject, conception is stunned and calculation confounded, and a most unpleasant incertitude induced upon the mind. Our slow-moving faculties cannot reckon the countless multitude, our subdivisions of time cannot find moments for the execution of the mighty work. The details of each case reaching to the inmost thought, the discrimination of their various merit and demerit, with the proportionate award of justice to each, seem a weary work, for which infinite time as well as Almighty faculties are required. Taking advantage of this confusion of the faculties of conception, many evil suggestions enter into the mind, and destroy the great effect which the revelation of Judgment to come is designed to produce. One thinks he will pass muster in such a crowd, and that he need not take the matter to heart; another, that he will find a sort of countenance in the multitudes that are

worse than he; a third, that if he be condemned it will be in the company of those whose company he preferred on earth, and will continue to prefer so long as he continues to be himself; and thus the whole power of the revelation is laid prostrate.

In like manner have I seen every other revelation of God deflowered of its beauty and defeated of its strength, by similar endeavours to dive into the methods by which it is to be carried into effect. For example, out of all the good which there is in the revelation of creation and providence, it were as easy to escape by similar interrogations into the method of operation.

It is said that God created man of the dust of the earth, and that he formed Eve of a rib from Adam's side. This, as it stands, is a sublime lesson of God's power and our humble origin, and of the common incorporate nature of man and woman; but if you go to task your powers of comprehension, you are punished for your presumption by the arid scepticism and barrenness of heart which comes over you. Make man of dust? we soliloquize, How is that? Of dust we can make the mould or form of man, but what is baked clay to living flesh and conscious spirit? Make it in one day?—these thousand fibres, more delicate than the gossamer's thread—these thousand vessels, more fine than the discernment of the finest instrument of vision—these bones, balanced and knit and compacted so strongly—these muscles, with their thousand combinations of movement—this secret organization of brain, the

seat of thought—the eye, the ear, the every sense, all constructed out of earth, and in one day? This stately form of manhood, which requires generation and slow conception, and the milky juices of the mother, and ten thousand meals of food, and the exercise of infinite thought and actions, long years of days and nights, the one to practise and train, the other to rest and refresh the frame, before it can come to any maturity—this to be created in one day out of primitive dust of the ground? Impossible! unintelligible! And if we go farther into the thing, and meditate that, seeing there was no second act of God, this creation out of dust was not of one man and one woman, but of all men and all women that have been and are to be for ever; that it was virtually the peopling of all nations and kingdoms of the earth in one day out of inanimate dust—who can fathom the work? It is inconceivable, idle, and not worthy a thought. Thus the mind becomes the dupe of its own inquisitiveness, and loseth all the benefit of this revelation.

Not less out of the comforts of Providence have I seen the wisest men beguiled by the nicety and importunateness of their research. They have reasoned of the multitude of God's avocations throughout the peopled universe, in every star imagining the centre of some revolving system, in every system the dwelling-place of various tribes of beings, until they had the Almighty so occupied as neither to have time nor care for our paltry earth. And if you can fix their attention upon the earth,

they do straightway so overwhelm themselves with the myriads who dwell thereon, and their own insignificant place amongst so many, that they cannot see the small part of his providence which can be afforded unto them; and thus, from prayer, from trust and hope of future bliss, they escape into a heartless indifference and a reckless independence towards their Creator;—all which ariseth from their subdividing, by active calculation, the great work which God hath to do, without, at the same time, multiplying the power of the Almighty to discharge it all, untroubled and undisturbed. I could show equally fatal results wrought by the same unrestrained appetite for speculation in the great work of redemption, but it would lead me away too far from the scope of the argument.

Now, as in creation I pretend not to unfold the methods of bringing all things into being and harmonious action, neither in providence to disclose the means for dealing out to them, day by day, those supplies of nourishment and power by which their being and their action are sustained; no more do I undertake to unfold the forms of process by which, in the last dread day, the Almighty Judge will deal out to each mortal the measure of his deserving or delinquency; being convinced that from any such attempt there would come up over my mind a mist thicker than that which covered the land of Egypt. But shall I therefore abide from sceptical men any derision or scorn to be cast upon this solemn affair? Never. The mole,

who worketh his little gallery under ground, may as well pretend to understand the minings and counterminings of a mighty army; the New Holland savage may as well pretend to understand the noble forms of a British Assize by his own club-law administration, as may vain man, though educated in these enlightened times, pretend to understand the forms of the Almighty procedure of judgment.

These perplexities are not to be resolved by any supply of intelligence, for we shall never be able to understand any of the works of God; but they are rather to be carried off by meditating upon the magnitude of the Almighty's power and wisdom to do all the pleasure of his will. As to founding scepticism or disbelief upon this incompetency of our conception, it is the height of weakness and ignorance; seeing there is not one single case in which conception does not suffer the same eclipse, and calculation the same confusion of their powers, when they would essay to contend with any other of the doings of the Lord. Let them endeavour to reckon up the number of mouths which he sustains in the various animal tribes; or the number of organs which go by their healthy operation to continue the well-being of each,—the fibrous sinews, the cellular folds, the pipes and channels through which life's fluids are diffused. Let them reckon up the number of seeds which he generates every year for their sustenance, or the many-webbed structure of one single plant. Let them tell the number of ima-

ginations which the indwelling soul can conceive, the rate at which they speed through the provinces of time and space, the number of past impressions which lie treasured in the mind, and the number of hopes and wishes which it sendeth scouting into the portentous future. Let them fathom the depths of space, and circumnavigate the outward bound of creation, and bring home the number of the stars through all the glorious galaxies and the milky way of heaven,—and sum the number of living things, vegetable, animal, and rational, which are found under the dominion of God; and they shall find how utterly unequal is the task, when the powers and faculties of man would cope with any one of the works of Almighty God.

Now, if by one word of his mouth he could create the subtle and pervading element of light, and by another carpet the chaotic earth with green and fragrant beauty, and by a third replenish all its chambers with living creatures, and by a fourth beget the winged fancy and creative thought of man; since which day of wondrous birth-giving creation hath stood strong and steadfast, and procreation gone on successive, and will continue so to do, (the astronomers demonstrate and the naturalists declare,) until the same powerful word interfere to shake and overthrow it all—who, who can misgive of the ability of God in one day of judgment to review all the effects which one day of creation did originate, and to organize a new constitution of things which shall be stable and everlasting as this in which we have our present

abode? It seemeth to me, that what we call the day of judgment, we shall thereafter call the day of second creation, on which God lanched our being anew, and furnished our voyage of existence the second time; and it may be recounted by us in one short chapter at the beginning of the sacred annals, even as our present creation is recounted in the Bible: and prove to us, when it is past, as incomprehensible a work as it now doth seem to us, looking forward, or as creation seemeth to us, looking backward; and, though incomprehensible, be as present to our feeling and our observation as the objects of creation are, and as demonstrative of God's justice as creation is demonstrative of his power.

As to the forms with which it is presented in Scripture, viz. the ushering in of the solemn day by the archangel and the trump of God—the white throne of judgment, with the judge that sitteth thereon—the glorious company of angels—the opening of the books, in which stand recorded every man's account of good and ill—the solemn separation, to the right and the left, of the two great divisions of men—and their separate verdicts of blessing and of cursing—these are no more to be understood by the letter than any other of the works of God, but to be taken as an image or device of the transaction, done with the best similitudes that the earth contains; and seeing there never was and never will be a state of society to which a day of judgment is strange, God hath chosen this emblem as being the most likely interpretation of it to the

understanding and feeling of all men in all ages to whom the tidings of it might come. But it were a vain thing to puzzle imagination and perplex conception with the details thereof, with the array of a human assize, or the bustle of a judgment-seat, where all the world was to appear and be taken successively under cognizance of the judge; for instantly immensity overwhelms, the thought and stupifies the feeling, the crowd forms a shelter to the fears, and the company, the innumerable companions of our fate, give a cheer to the misgiving heart. We throw ourselves loose, therefore, from the details of the ritual, and aim at nothing but to preserve the spirit of the transaction; not but that these details are highly useful and in the very best keeping with the majesty and terror of the scene, serving to convey ideas and imaginations of the great event, and to embody it to the mind; and being used for inspiring reverence and awakening conscience and setting forth impartial retribution and resistless power, they serve good ends of knowledge and feeling—but because when used for straining conception, and deafening conviction and impairing belief, they do but befool us in the maze of God's power, which our faculties cannot unravel.

If I were to venture an opinion upon the manner of the action, it would be this: that it will take place, not by a successive summons of each individual, and a successive inquisition of his case, but by an instantaneous separation of the two classes the one from the other. Nor do I fancy to myself the bodily presence of any judge, or

the utterance by his lips of vocal sounds, although it be so written, any more than I fancy a loud voice to have been uttered by the Eternal for the light to come forth at first, or any other part of the material universe to arise into being. But I rather think it to be more congenial to the other works of God, when it is imagined that these souls, and the bodies recreated for their use, will be planted, without knowing how, each class in the abodes prepared for them; and that they will not be consulted about the equity of the measure. God will leave them to find out the rectitude of the proceeding, as he left us to find out the rectitude of his proceeding at the fall. He told Adam of the loss of paradise. If Adam had speculated thereon, he would have found himself unequal to the speculation. Yet the word of the Lord stood fast, and he found himself stripped and denuded, in the twinkling of an eye, of his pristine glory and innocence. God did not bandy the question with him, nor try conclusions as at a human bar. The thing came about by moral laws of being, older than the creation—yea, old as the eternal existence of God; and, in the same manner, by laws of being equally old and sure, will come about the opening of paradise again to the righteous, and the barring of hope and happiness to the wicked.

But though, in this summary manner most like to a divine work, we present the thing to your conception, we do in nothing invalidate the principle upon which the division of righteous from wicked is to come about, but rather make it the more

valid, seeing it is, like the threatening in paradise, the only thing to which we have to look. If we were to have a debate for our life, even after having contravened the prescript, then verily hope would suspend itself upon the chance of a fortunate or mitigated issue. But now, when we give up this as mere exposition and enforcement of the great separation and awful issues, it becomes more momentous to dwell on that separate description of character which comes in for the whole determination of our fate.

I regard all descriptions of judgment, therefore, to be only a way of stating to us the design of God, as to our recovery from this fallen state and re-admission into paradise, or our expulsion from this purgatorial state of existence and detrusion to the changeless settlements of the reprobate. These descriptions are no more than, "Do this and live;" "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" uttered in a more expanded form to address the various faculties of human nature, fancy, judgment, fear, hope, pain, or pleasure; but they do no more imply that by the forms of an earthly tribunal we shall be judged, than the creation of animals at first implies the modes of their present creation. When the end of all things hath come, and the renovation of all things hath taken place, I reckon that the bodies of men will start from their unconscious state of dispersion and dissolution, as the materials of Adam's body came at first from their secret and various places, or as the earth teemed out her various tribes; and that the soul will come from its intermediate sojourn, as Adam's

soul came; no one knoweth whence, and be united to her antient comrade. So that the moment the sleep of death is broken by the trump of God, we shall find ourselves, each one ere we wis, with the paradise of heaven overshadowing our heads, or the pavement of hell glowing beneath our feet!

This mode of conceiving the matter, which is the only one congenial to the other operations of the Almighty, doth in no respect do away with the Scripture emblems; for it is no less a judgment because it is so prompt and summary, and it is no less a day of judgment, seeing it is the commencement of a new era, like the days of creation. The mind may startle at the liberty or daringness of these conceptions, but we do propound them out of no rash nor vain-glorious spirit, being conscious of entire inadequacy to such matters, but only to break the charm, and deliver at once from that body of perplexities which hath no existence but in the folly of interpreting the emblems of Scripture with a fastidious nicety; nor will it hinder me the less from entering with minutest inquiry into the principles upon which the decision is to be founded.

But there remain still two previous questions: one, as to God's ability to bear in mind all the conscious thoughts, expressed words, and performed actions of every creature that hath lived, so as to divide destiny with such dexterous arbitration among them all—the other, as to our satisfaction with, and acquiescence in, the verdict.

For the first I answer, that by the same wondrous attributes by which God hath created and doth sus-

tain all thinking, active minds; he is able to observe and notify and keep account of their infinite imaginations and actions, good and ill. It is surely an easy thing for him, who hath created, to understand that which he hath created, and to know and to reckon up the results which it doth produce by its operation. The Father of human thought surely knoweth his child; he that constructed the machinery of human nature, and fitted all the things in the world to act thereon for good or for evil, and gave a law approving or disapproving every possible consciousness which ariseth within or escapeth outward by speech or action; that same Being doubtless is able to observe, nay, and cannot but be observant of every creature, and of every creature's various thoughts, and of every creature's various motives, and of every creature's various actions, whether they be subordinated to the principles which that creature knoweth from his own conscience, or from God's law, to be good. Whosoever believeth that the human race sprung from the Father of all, and from him had those laws of their nature, out of which have been evolved the whole series of thought and action which constitute life, must admit that he can sum the series at the end, and exhibit the exact amount of good and ill, of obedience and disobedience, which it contains.

But I will advance somewhat further, and declare, that it seemeth to me a thing impossible, that to any creature under the sun aught should happen of which God is unconscious. It were a limitation of his divinity to think so. There were,

in that case, dark chambers into which we could retire out of his sight, regions of experience where we might dwell out of his control. There were things which had a power to come and go without a warrant, elements of creation escaped from their bounden spheres, which now benighted their Creator, and kept from their quarters his pervading sight; than which nothing can be more absurd, seeing there is no power which he hath not bestowed, and no function of being whereof he doth not supply the ability; to the exercise of which he must, therefore, be conscious. Every course, righteous and sinful, obedient and disobedient, regular and eccentric, we pursue in the strength of his sustenance; and what he gives power to do, he surely must know the doing of—else, how could he apportion the power to do it? This is no less true in the world within the breast than it is in the world without. For what is a thought within the mind but an accident that hath happened to the inward man? an event in the spiritual world, an offspring of the mind which God created. If such could happen without God's perception, then we are reduced to believe that, in their various actions and reactions, things are capable of some results by God unforeseen, to God unknown, and by God unprovided for; that he had placed in them a faculty without knowing that he had placed it there; that they were more liberally endowed than he meant them to be; that he had given without being conscious of having given, and did surpass with his creative hand the purpose of his intending will. In the world of

matter, therefore, it is true that the hairs of our head are numbered, that a sparrow falleth not to the ground without the permission of God; and in the world of mind it is no less true, that in him we live, and move, and breathe, and have our being.

All that hath happened in his creation God must necessarily know—then it becomes a question if he can ever forget. Here again we transfer to God ideas drawn from our own limited being. Remembering and forgetting, so far as I can understand, are not the attributes of a separate spirit, but of an embodied spirit. The distinctions of past, present, and to come, are not in the events themselves, which are constantly existing on every side, and which do not grow old with the past, or come alive from the future, but are ever certain like the present. The past is immersed and lost sight of in a sea of present impressions, yet is not lost, but comes floating up by suggestion of the present, or when we retire from the obtrusion of the present. The future, again, is obscure only through imperfection of knowledge, and can be anticipated with certainty, according to the accuracy of science, as astronomy and other sciences show. So that of any spirit, it seems to me, which hath no body to occupy it with present sensation, the thoughts must ever live, and never be forgotten; and in every spirit which hath perfect knowledge of any department of creation, the future must be as certain as the present and the past. To God, therefore, to whom appertaineth knowledge infinite of what is, that which is to come, is present and

certain; to God, to whom all things are equally known, all things must be equally present. At any point of time he must be the same as at any other point of time, not more knowing, not more wise. To imagine forgetfulness in him were to imagine fluctuation and change. Time is a current down which he passeth not; he is like the ocean out of which it is fed, and into which it returns again.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that God, who gave to every man his proper measure of faculties, and placed him in a field more or less fertile of opportunity to good and temptation to evil, and lit up in every man's breast a greater or a smaller light of understanding, and gave to some no revelation, placed others under false religions, and others under superstitious forms of the true religion, and, finally, gave to us Protestants the whole sum of saving knowledge, is able to observe and note each one according to the various given conditions of his existence, and treat each one hereafter according to the nicest discrimination of justice. Each one, therefore, whatever degree of intellect he possesseth, and in whatever chamber of life he dwells, may depend upon it that his Maker, who places and sustains him there for the performance of the best duties he can discern, doth take knowledge of his goings out and his comings in, doth search the heart and try the reins, and remark every word while yet it resteth half-formed upon the lips.

But there still remaineth one most important preliminary question: How we ourselves shall be conscious of the justice of the decision which God

hath the knowledge and the wisdom to discern? For it is of the essence of justice, that the various offences of which one is accused should be brought home to his consciousness and conviction, before he can be fairly condemned; and if this be not done, the mind rises in its strength against the award of judgment, and regards itself a martyr to the cause of justice. Nay more, it is equally essential to justice, that the offender have room to plead in his own behalf every thing in extenuation of his guilt. Now, saith the perplexed mind, how shall this take place at the last arraignment, when we are raised from our graves and mustered to the grand assize?—Even before we leave the coasts of time, the greater part of our transactions, good and bad, have passed into oblivion; the dotage of old age hath perhaps come on, and reduced life into a fugitive dream:—How then, when we are awakened from the tomb, shall the memory of all that we have done be recovered, that we may be brought to the bar in a state to hear and meet our accusations, and acquiesce in the righteousness of judgment? And, being at the bar, shall we have a hearing for ourselves? Life, even with the aids of revelation, is an intricate affair, and the best guided are often in perplexity; while, without revelation, it is a matter almost of haphazard whether we go right or wrong. Customs, over the origin of which we had no control—opinions which we found bearing the world before them—misgovernment of rulers, lashing subjects into madness—weary toil, consuming the time and very faculty of thought—stormy passions within

the breast—gross darkness without, covering the age and place of our nativity—these things mastered us, (as whom can they not master!) and these pleas we have a right to be heard on, otherwise, that judgment of yours is a mass of iniquity and a medley of confusion.

Now, here is a nice question requiring a nice solution, and leading into inquiries which are almost entitled to a separate place in this argument of Judgment to Come. We are given to understand from Scripture, and natural justice itself requires, that there should be no change nor alteration for the better or the worse effected upon the soul after death, seeing that it is to be judged for the things done in the body, whether they have been good or evil. As death seizeth us, judgment must find us. As the tree falls, so it lieth. Now, wicked men get seared in conscience as with a red-hot iron, and for the most part die hard and whole of heart as the nether millstone. There would need a resurrection of soul as well as body, to make it conscious to God's righteous judgment, without which consciousness the award can have no moral power. Into this difficult inquiry I enter, not without hopes of casting light upon a subject hitherto dark and untrodden, which will need no small patience of investigation, and will reward it with results most necessary to the understanding of the issues after death.

There must pass upon the soul, when disembodied, various changes of which it is not impossible, though difficult, to discern the nature and the effects; for, though none have returned to tell

the great effect, we all suffer partial deaths, from the effect of which it is possible to reason as to the effect of dissolution itself. We go into the investigation of this great effect, upon *the principle* that the soul herself passes through death unhurt, that no part of her existence is destroyed; that she retaineth the same contents of thoughts, feelings, and hopes, on the other, as on this side the dark confines of the grave. Only she loses the enjoyments of the body and the presence of her friends, and her power of conversing with material scenes, but no part of her consciousness is destroyed. This is our object, not to speculate upon any revolution which the Almighty may please out of his power and will to bring upon our being at death, but to inquire what effects death may be expected naturally to produce upon a righteous and unrighteous soul? Of the various effects which must then pass upon the soul, we think the nature and direction, though not the quantity, may be discerned from the partial deaths which we are constantly undergoing by loss of friends, beloved objects, confinement, sickness, and other mutilations of our entire condition. Let us see what effects these occasional obscurations of her outward estate have upon the thinking, feeling principle within, and thence we may learn how it fares with the soul when she is disembodied. The knowledge of this will enable us to cast light upon the question, Whether we will acquiesce in the Judge's determination?

The first thing I perceive in death is the great

change it will make in enhancing the past and future over the present. I think it will go hard to annihilate the present altogether. In our present condition, things that are past are spoken of as dead or out of existence, and things that are to come are spoken of as unborn, and things present alone as being in real existence. But this popular way of conceiving and speaking is not according to truth. For things when they are past are not dead to us, but live and act upon our condition in a thousand ways; they live in memory, and go to compose all our knowledge and experience and wisdom; they affect us with repentance and remorse, or with joy and self-complacency, according to their character of good or ill; they prepare us for the present by the habits which they engender, and for the future by the resolutions to which they give birth. Neither are future events, though unborn to sense, without life or influence over the mind. They already live in hope and fear, and desire and schemes; they cause the largest share of our anxiety and arrangement, and determine the better part of our happiness or misery. The soul is spread out both behind and before, and with its wings stretcheth both ways into time, and struggleth hard to compass the round orb of eternity. It is an error, therefore, both in conception and language, to speak of the present as the only period actually existing before the soul; it is the only period actually existing before the senses of the body, and from this the loose popular way of speaking hath originated. The vision, the noise, and the feeling

of present things are so engaging as to have cast the past and the future into the insignificance and dimness of morning and evening twilight. Present things hit the sense, and our senses carry such a weight in the empire of the mind, being its five great intelligencers with the outward world, that they have deluded her into the notion that they are the five elements of her existence. Now, that she hath an existence independent of them, is manifested by her occupation in silence and solitude, when she will close her senses, and have a glad or gloomy season of active cogitation; nay, she will grow into such absorption with her inward being as to lose the consciousness of things passing around; she will sit in bustling places, yet hear no noises; move along the crowded streets, yet behold no spectacles; consume her meals, yet taste no savours. Yea, though you surround the body with discomfort, and sting the senses with acutest pain, the soul which hath past heroism and virtue to reflect on, or future triumphs to anticipate, will smile in the midst of torture, and grow insensible to torment;—in all which cases, the life of the past and the future is triumphing over the life of the present. In truth, the present, both for its briefness and the briefness of all its sensations, is incomparably the least significant part of human existence, and it approximates a man to the lower animals according as his affections are set thereon. With a true man, the present is prizable only as it cometh out of the womb of past anticipation, bringing things

hoped for to hand, and as it may be wrought up into the tissue of our schemes for well-developing the future. It is like the lees of the cask, to which you come not till you have first drunk the extract of pure and joyful juice, and which are best employed in being turned over to strengthen and impregnate other wholesome decoctions.

Seeing, therefore, that the present would fall altogether out of sight were it not for this constant conversation which the soul is forced by the senses to maintain with outward things, and even by that necessity scarcely keeps its ground in wise and enlightened spirits; it is manifest that when that necessity ceaseth, as it doth at death, the past and the future will come to be all in all to man. In proof of which, behold the existence of one who is immured in a solitary dungeon, and shut in from the invasion of the outward world—his present existence is nothing, his past is all; he goeth over and over the days of his life, the accidents and actions of which come forth as out of twilight. He remembers, and recals and recovers from the wastes of oblivion, until he wonders at the strength of his memory. Set open to him a hope of deliverance, and, consuming the gloomy days and weary months between, he already lives with the future yet unborn, the present is used only to consume his food, which he almost nauseates, and he notches upon his tally or marks upon the wall one solitary mark, its only memorial.

Now you are prepared to understand how it will be with man when he is disembodied. The

body which containeth the senses lies mouldering in the grave; the hollow places where the ball of the eye did roll in its beauty, and the ear sat pleased in her vocal chambers, are passages for the worms to creep in and out to their feast upon the finer organs of the brain, where the soul had her council-chamber; and the finely woven nerves of taste and smell, which called upon every clime of the earth for entertainment, with all the beauty which nature pencilled with her cunning hand upon the outward form of man, are now overspread with the clammy and contagious fingers of corruption, and some feet of earth hide their unsightly dissolution from the view and knowledge of mankind. The link is broken and rusted away which joined the soul to the enjoyments or the troubles of the present world. No new material investments are given to her, whereby to move again in the midst of these material things; no eye, nor ear, nor wakeful sense, by which intrusion may come as heretofore into the chambers of her consciousness. Till the resurrection she shall be disunited, and then, being rejoined by her former companions, they shall be submitted to material scenes, again to suffer and enjoy. What is there now to occupy the soul? there is no world, for with the world she hath no means of conversing; she is separate, she is alone; she dwelleth evermore within herself. There are no sensations nor pursuits to take her off from self-knowledge and self-examination. In Peter's emphatical language, she is in prison; ("Jesus went and preached to

the spirits in prison;") that is, she hath no power of travelling out amongst things, but is shut up to her own remembrances, thoughts, and anticipations.

Now, seeing it is the fact, that when the soul is delivered from surrounding and disturbing objects and occupying sensations, she recovereth with wonderful rapidity the lost impressions of the past, and ascertaineth with much judgment her present condition, it is not to be doubted, that when she hath suffered her great separation, she will be busily occupied with recovering from the past all her experience, and observing all her condition. Indeed I can see no other occupation to which she can devote herself in her purely spiritual existence, save this of revoking from oblivion all the past, and calling up from the future all things dreaded or hoped for. These are the materials of her being, unless God make some addition, and whatever addition he makes will be in unison with these. These are the elements of her happiness, upon which she is to cogitate, reason, and feel. She may work them into new forms, conjure them by active imagination into more bright and more numerous ideas, work upon them by the rules of reasonable thought; but I cannot see, by my understanding, whence she is to derive any new materials. Therefore she will doat and dream over her condition, live all the past over again, and float away into the future. And I cannot help thinking that every thing will come to light that hath ever befallen her in time,

But though the events should not all be recovered which brought the soul into the condition in which she finds herself when disembodied (and this is not necessary to our argument), one thing is certain, that whatever she doth recover will stand out before her in a light altogether new, and that she will pass upon herself other judgments than those with which she is at present content. Witness when you are laid on a bed of sickness, how you ruminate and reflect and turn the eye inward upon the state of your soul; how offended conscience raiseth up her voice, and future fears come trooping up, like spirits from the realms of night. Consider, in every case, the different feelings with which you spend your time, and reflect upon it after it is spent. The wheels of enjoyment glide smoothly along, while regaled with gay companionship and festive mirth, and a thousand happy emotions of body and of mind; but companions being gone and the light of enjoyment fled, when the mind looks back on the scene so gladsome, what a different aspect doth it wear! It is to turn the eye from the morning, gloriously streaked with the radiancy of coming day, backward to the west, where the sable curtains of night still infold the heavens and the earth. Oh Conscience, what a cheat thou art! How thou allowest thyself to be laid asleep by present sensations of delight, and then risest upon us in secret in all thy gloomy strength!—Thou art cowardly, for thou takest us alone and in darkness. Thou art treacherous, for thou forsakest thy post to

the enemy. Thou art weak, for thou standest us in no stead in our necessity. Would that thou didst either take us or let us alone, either give us up to enjoyment, and trouble us not with thine after-thoughts, or else take us to thyself, and make us what thou art ever harping upon us to become!

Now, how cometh it to pass, that reflection should cast such a shade into the estimation of our lives, if it be not that the thoughts are shut up within themselves when we ruminate, and the outward world kept apart. We suffer in the body a kind of disembodying, and the result is severe convictions of the idleness and wickedness of our lives. What, then, shall be the nature of our reflections when we are disembodied in very truth, and the world is escaped into the land of visions? Then, I truly ween, there will be a scrutiny, and a self-arraignment more severe than hath ever passed in monkish cell or hermit's cave. The soul will unfold the leaves of her experience, which since they were engraven had never before been turned out to her inspection. The glorious colours which illumined them are gone, the pomp, the vanity, the applause, the sensual joy; there is nothing left but the blank and bare engraving upon the tablet; and conscience is its severe interpreter, not worldly interest, ambition, or folly; and there is no companionship of fellows or masters in wickedness to keep us in heart; and there is no hope of amendment to chaste self-accusation, no voice of consolation, no preaching of recovery, no sound of salvation: all is blank soli-

tude, spiritual nakedness, stark necessity, and changeless fate. The soul must have an irksome time of it, if so be that she hath lent no ear to the admonitions of her better part, and to the counsels of God which sustaineth these. It affrights me while I write, to think of it. I ask no torments, such as our immortal poet hath imagined, for the disembodied spirit:—

> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice—
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
> Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts
> Imagine howling!

Neither do I ask the Inferno of the father of modern poetry, with its seven circles of punishments, downwards to the centre, according to the heinousness of crime. These fancies I give to the poet and the orator, and guiding myself in this difficult subject by what light reason can derive from observing the present habitudes of the soul, I say again it affrights me, while I write, to think of the souls of wicked men in their disembodied state.

Such is the light upon this difficult subject of the wicked soul's condition till judgment, which I can derive from the simple consideration of her being separated from her former companion, and driven upon her spiritual resources of reflection and hope. But as this is an inquiry which con-

cerns an important portion of human destiny, and decides the question of the soul's preparation for, and acquiescence in the judgment, I count it worth the while, both for the sake of the argument and for the further satisfaction of our mind, to push this inquiry as far as our faculties can go with clear discernment.

I shall therefore take a still wider circle of observation upon the nature of the disembodied soul, that, if possible, we may stand in awe and tremble at the terrors which must seize and rack the soul of the wicked in its solitary state; for this is a high argument and worthy of many words. Observe, then, and study a man who gives himself with avidity to the present, thoughtless and indifferent about the coming future. While things continue prosperous, that is, while the appetites of the body and the mind have a sufficient supply of entertainment from the visible world, none is more contented, more happy, more gay than he. One part of his nature after another he embarks upon the ocean of things seen and temporal; he spreadeth every sail to the prosperous winds, and seems to every beholder a flourishing and noble sight; and feeleth within himself (we deny it not) a right cheerful and goodly frame. For why? because he is pleasantly occupied; each winged wish hunting among the flowery haunts of pleasure, and bringing honeyed sweetness home. Now, to this cheerful, world-loving man, let aught occur to disappoint his outgoing messengers of pleasure, and drive them in defeated upon himself;

and then remark the change. Let a beloved wife, upon whose kindly worth fondness did doat, be cut off from his embrace; or let a scheme of ambition intemperately pursued miscarry; or let the vessel of his fortunes be taken aback and dispersed upon the waste ocean of adversity; or even let smaller accidents occur—a rival get the lead of public favour, a dishonourable rumour go abroad, health misgive, and the ritual of a sick-bed be enforced—any thing, in short, which may cast a veil over the brilliancy of the outward world, or induce a deafness upon the mind within to the world's weary calls—then what happeneth? A cloud scarfeth up the light of enjoyment, and the world is clad in melancholy weeds. The mind cometh home and broodeth over its sorrow; it looketh to the present and findeth vacancy; a blank mist resteth upon its pleasant fields, and sadness reigns in the palace of joy; it looks backwards, but finds no cool reflective seasons to flee to, no forecastings of this direful day, nor instructions how to bear it; no heartfelt sympathy undergone in the grief of others: for full engagement with present things is the death both of sympathy and foresight. In the future there are no vistas of hope to happier regions. The only resource is either to arm against the world and turn misanthrope, or to hurry fast as possible into its rapids out of this insufferable calm. But if melancholy sit close, and will not scatter before enjoyment, and will not sour into scorn and derision—if melancholy will sit close, then the health decays by soul-consuming

grief, and the candle of life goes out long before it is burnt down, by reason of the damp and heavy atmosphere which surrounds it.

If then, I argue, to the soul that is all occupied with the present, there cometh such discomfiture from the loss of some one or other of its beloved objects, what must come to pass at its dismemberment from friends and fortune and beautiful world, and beloved body and all visible tangible things! What a wreck was there! What a dispersion! What a spoiled feast! What a deluged garden! What a solitude is this! What wants are these! What upstarting thoughts! What spiritual images of the past, which rise from the mists of oblivion, each one shaking his scourge! What gloomy messengers from the future, pale with the fearful tidings which they bring! I say again, it grieves me while I write, to think upon the misery of the spirit which is rudely disembodied in the midst of all its avocations with the present and thoughtlessness of the past and future.

But I must unveil and discover a little more. When it doth so happen, as it doth most frequently, that upon the season of reflection which adversity or calamity hath brought, there invadeth the memory of past duties neglected, of good feelings trodden under foot, of crimes committed against the peace and welfare of others, of misconduct or mismanagement, dishonesty, lavishness, or dissipation—then cometh midnight. Conscience ariseth in her might, and she bringeth such a train—stinging recollections, burning shame,

fruitless repinings, self-accusations, with all the agonies of a wounded spirit. It is a direful meeting this, the meeting of misfortune with an accusing conscience, and of its effects it boots not to describe;—the physician of the heart-broken can tell, even Jesus Christ, who alone availeth in such direful seasons; the asylum of lunatics can tell; the black calendar of self-murder can tell; the agonies of the breast, which draw on to these unhinged states, can tell; the tragical events of the world can tell; all melancholy adventures of love and glory, which live in song and popular tale over the unhappy earth, can tell; to which we refer the inquisitive, being unwilling to attempt a task, to think of which almost maketh reason to totter upon her throne.

Now, I argue again, if the consciousness of crime, coupled with the absence of some cherished thing, can so scorch the mind and scathe its fertility into a bleak and barren wilderness—what, what must happen when the mind hath nothing to see or hear or read or talk of, no engagement but to dwell alone and apart in the chambers of her own consciousness; if so be that she hath the folly, the crime, the callousness, the contempt of conscience, and the contempt of God, during a whole lifetime, to reflect upon; at the very time she hath lost every possession down to the very raiment of flesh and blood which she was clothed withal. Nothing equal to this can be conceived, nothing second to it, nothing like it.

All this disturbance which ensues within the

breast when its thoughts are driven inward, and which must redouble itself ten thousand times in the intense reviewal and meditation which filleth up the long and dreary season between life's setting sun and the breaking of the resurrection morn, doth arise from not giving to the past and the future that high consideration to which we have shown them to be entitled; and the only defence there is against such tides and tumults of the mind, is to have the past as well reviewed and the future as well provided for as it is given us to have. For while the present is the lord of the ascendant, the mind suffers a sort of tyrannical usurpation. The giant powers of the past and future, by far her noblest faculties, are under imprisonment, from which they come forth, when the spell of the present is broken, and do destruction upon our peace; the soul suffers an insurrection of the powers of reason and principle against the seated and established powers of habit, which often doth not end without the most direful effects upon both the body and the mind.

This side of the picture we shall examine no further, for it grows wearisome and painful; but it remains that, in justice to the subject, we open up the other side, and trace out, by a like method of analysis, the preparation in life and condition at death which are likely to endure under this total bereavement of all present things. And here again we shall follow the same method of inquiry, as the only one that is competent to such a question, proceeding from the smaller to the greater, from the

part to the whole, upon the principle that whatever serves to re-establish the soul under the partial eclipses of its present state, will be most likely to sustain it under that total eclipse which cometh over it at the dissolution of the body. PASCAL, in his Thoughts upon Religion, most truly and beautifully remarks, that the death of every relative, the loss of every temporal good, the extinction of every worldly delight, is, as it were, a partial death done upon ourselves, a loss of one or other of our members upon the earth; and is sent by God as an experiment, in order to prove how we shall be able to bear the annihilation of them all. Therefore as we have from such vicissitudes ascertained the sting which follows death, so from the same we may ascertain the consolation and joy which follow death. In this inquiry into the experience of the disembodied soul, we follow the method which the mathematicians do in their higher calculations; from certain partial changes which are given in one state of the variable quantity, we ascertain the amount of the change in another state of the variable quantity, and present the latter in a function of the former.

Let us then contemplate what sustains the spirit of a man under the removal of those things upon which his desire is set here below, that we may gather what will support his soul when bereaved of all its corporeal possessions and enjoyments. When a beloved object is removed, there is for a season within the soul a sense of emptiness, as if really a part of herself had been torn away. Into,

this empty chamber she retireth to dwell alone. Engagements and pleasures, and discourse of friends, are for a while foregone. Inaction of body, abstraction of mind, a fixed eye and a sealed spirit go with us, and cleave unto us like our shadow. "Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!" But by degrees nature recovers from the blow which had stunned her powers, and then her first employment is to look back into the annals of the past, when her delight was with the departed object of her love; and if she finds that she had treated it well, that she had honoured it in the highest place, and made of it the most account; that its memory is associated with duties performed, and kind offices discharged; that she can ruminate upon virtuous and innocent and happy intercourse, and discourse with contentment and gratification of all that passed between them; that there is no invasion of repentance nor remorse, for arrears of love unpaid, or overtures of advantage unaccepted: then she hath a consolation, and to memory she fleeth as to a city of refuge. The object gone getteth a second life, it liveth in those parts of the mind which dwell with the past; in the seasons of stillness it cometh up and keepeth us company, it riseth up like a spirit in the places where we sojourned together, it cometh to us in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, invested with those same attributes of love and joy which it wore towards us in our earthly converse, and which it weareth still in the converse of memory. But besides living with the past, it liveth

also with the present, in the affections which it cultivated, in the good habits which it strengthened, and the good interests which it hath secured; when we rejoice over the good and worthy part of our nature, it shareth in our joy; and when we pursue the honourable paths to which it accompanied us once, it accompanieth us still; and when we tend alone the cares to which it once gave us aid, we reflect upon its councils and walk in its footsteps. An object therefore which hath been rightly used continues to have a share of the happy, holy parts of our life, and is as it were only cut off from the senses, but to the spirit is present as before. To these two we join, if it be possible, the anticipation of beholding it again—we seek to give it a life in those parts of the soul which hold converse with the future; and it is unspeakable the consolation which comes from any shadow of hope in this direction. This poureth life anew into the chambers of death, and eternity into the moulds of time. Death loseth his sting, and the grave her victory, and mortality is swallowed up in life. We seem to hear the departed spirit inviting us to come and be joined to its fellowship, to hasten and come unto our rest. Death is a journey from friends to friends, life a visit amongst friends, and death a return to our friends.

These are the only essential consolations which we have within ourselves for an object removed from our sight, and it is manifest they can be partaken of only by those who, not engrossed with the present, have given themselves much up to the

past and the future; viz. by the children of reflection and of hope. But the mind hath no pleasure in reflection, unless it hath attended to the calls of virtue and of goodness, and given ear to the sense of right, from whatever quarter derived, whether from the light of nature, or from the word of God; for if we have held down the better sentiments of our breast and given loose to the worse, then reflection will be painful while man is man, and being painful will be diligently eschewed, so long as there is a gleaning of enjoyment from the present. Neither will hope spring within a mind whose memory festers with wounds, but despair, rather, and recklessness of all conclusions. On this account, as hath been argued at large in a former part of this Discourse, the Gospel dispensation salveth the wounds of memory, and coucheth the eye of hope ere ever it makes request for a hearing. This dispensation, therefore, and, wherever this is absent, the consciousness within the breast of good and upright conduct, will encourage the reflective and hopeful faculties of a man to display themselves, and bring him into the capacity of drinking from those rivers of consolation described above. But where the Gospel constitution, being known, is despised and contravened, or where, not being known, the admonitions of wisdom and goodness within the breast are trampled under foot, these rivers of consolation can never be tasted, and until repentance and reformation of life ensue, they will mock our parched lips. So that they appertain exclusively to the righteous

under the Gospel, to its believing servants; without the Gospel, to the servants of the good law written on their hearts.

Furthermore, another thing which sustaineth the spirit of a man wounded by the dispensations of God, is the conviction that they *are* the dispensations of God, meant for health, however bitterly they taste. This is a sublime consolation, which none but the pious and resigned can reach, but being reached, it is to grief an elixir of life. It springs not so much from an act of faith at the afflicted season, as from the constant habit of receiving every good gift from the hand of God, and holding it in loan until it please him to call it up again—taking the bestowal in pledge of his goodness, and the removal in trial of our fidelity and trust. Looking upon the whole vicissitudes of Providence as a correspondence between us and our Father in a far country, which he wisely arrangeth so as to call into lively exercise every sentiment of dutiful children, we feel a constant fortitude and firmness, and, what is more, a constant activity of mind, to read the several communications, and interpret their contents of good, and make the needful arrangements for realizing the same. The seal is often black and the signet full of fear, and with a trembng hand we break the cover and unfold the contents, and our hearts die within us while we peruse the sorrowful tidings; for the present it is not joyous but grievous; yet in the end it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, when our minds have been exercised therewith.

Now this source of consolation is manifestly one with which the wicked and impious do not intermeddle, forasmuch as it cannot be grasped at once, but succeeds to a habit of regarding the intentions of Providence in our lot. They only have it who see all things in God, and taste all things in God, who in him live and move, and breathe and have their being, who, whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, do all to his glory. Often hath it been my lot to offer it to ungodly people; they listened, but it was a vocal sound which made no stay; and if they sought to taste, it was an apple of Sodom which to them had but a painted rind, or fairy gold which dissolved into dust, or changed to idle leaves. The people, therefore, whose god is earthly honour or glory, or riches, or luxury, or self-aggrandizement of any kind, and who take the goods that God provideth them from the hands of good fortune, or the patronage of great men, or their own deservings, and use them, while they tarry, to gratify and build up the parts of nature to which the merit of them is given, must when these props of their good estate misgive, feel tottering upon that side which they sustained; and when they pass away, they must feel disabled, even according to the measure of trust which they reposed on them, and discomforted according to the measure of enjoyment which they derived from that quarter of their being. They have no resource, that I can see, but passively to endure. Blank patience, without any thing to be patient for, which surely is the most

intolerable of all things, as saith the scathed soul of Faustus in the German poet.

Finally; a third resource, which the mind hath in such troubled seasons, is to repose upon that which is not and cannot be removed. The shock given by a great bereavement produceth upon the mind a kindred feeling with the shock of an earthquake. All seems unhinged, all places equally insecure. We flee in one direction, the earth trembles, we pause and flee in the opposite; we are running from destruction, and we feel as if we were running into its jaws. So disaster and bereavement shake the soul in all its chambers as an earthquake shakes the earth, and for a while we feel as if the foundations of all visible enjoyment were broken up, and the links of all affection torn asunder. At such a season, it is comfort unspeakable to have something which cannot be removed whereon to repose. Such a refuge hath the mind in the things of the world to come, over which change hath not any power. "None of these things move me, so that I may finish my course with joy." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble. Therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river whose streams do make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High: God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved."

These three things, the embalming of the object lost to sense in memory and hope; the consciousness of good ends subserved by its removal; the assurance of better things which cannot be removed—are a sort of sacred tripod to the spirit which no shock from earth or hell can overturn. They give her a terrible strength before which all pains of soul and body are harmless, and all tyrant inflictions defeated. In dungeons, thus sustained, she hath a joy, which the brave Haxtoun declared to be above the enjoyment of life's loveliest places. Martyrs have become unconscious to the cruelest tortures, and in a divine heat of bravery have rushed again to meet them. And in these quieter times, orphans and widows and afflicted people of every name take refuge thereon, and bear calamities with a magnanimity to which knowledge and philosophy and sentiment are strangers; and seasons of affliction become pregnant with the greatest advantage; and they know the joy of grief, about which sentimental writers do but prate. One by one they resign the spirits of their dearest kindred into the hand of the Lord's tender mercy. One by one they deposit their earthly tabernacle in the silent tomb, and while the tears of nature follow the much-beloved object, their spirits rise to heaven, and hold communion with the spirit that is gone, and long for the happy day when they also, being dismantled, shall join it in the realms of immortal bliss.

Now to apply the above reasoning to the great bereavement of death, which is the thing in ques-

tion. When death arrives, we are parted from the body, from the world, and from the beloved of our souls which dwell thereon; and are left in a state of intense self-consciousness and solitary thought. I know not what God may have provided for the immediate enjoyment or suffering of our spirits in the world of spirits. That is not revealed, because it would not be intelligible if it were; seeing we have not an idea, and cannot have, of spiritual existence or employment by any other way than that which I am following out—our own interior thoughts and feelings. We have suffered, I say, such a loss of the body and the earth, and the beloved companions of our pilgrimage; and what is there to sustain and comfort our spirits under this bereavement, save the three great consolations mentioned above? If we have used our body for strengthening in the soul temperance and self-command, and building up active habits of well-doing; if we have used the world as a stage or theatre, on which to carry these into effect, conversing with visible things modestly, and using them for the wholesome ends of our own edification in godliness, and the advancement of God's glory; and if with the beloved kindred of our souls we have lived in peace and fraternity, joining with them all chaste and affectionate unions, sharpening them to good feeling as iron sharpeneth iron, and provoking them to good works;—then the soul will be filled through all her regions with satisfaction, and muse with delight upon that which she hath left behind. Add to this the

second consolation, of being in her Creator's merciful hands, to whom she resigned, and to whose near neighbourhood she knoweth she is approaching. I know not, I speculate not upon, the new unions which the soul will have when these carnal veils are taken off. But much, much are we taught to hope for. We are represented in this state as being all but drifted out of reach of the Divine favour, which was not rejoined but by the sternest adventure of mercy; and death being past, we get as it were out of the cold and frozen regions of our present condition, and, by means I know not, are transformed into a holy communion with the celestials. But, though all unconscious how it is to be with her, I know the soul of the righteous doth drop as it were asleep into the lap of God, and they have ravishments of delight between sleeping and waking—images of glory from the other side, signs and beckonings, and triumphant frames which cast the by-standers into silent wonder!

In short, (for we wander without bounds in this sea of discourse,) from all these considerations which have been mentioned, and many more, to mention which would make this digression disproportionate to the measure of the whole discourse, it seemeth to me that death hath no sooner planted his pale signet upon the cold brow of our body, than a first initiatory judgment hath us in its hold, a first paradise, or a first hell instantly ensueth. All the past comes floating down, and all the future comes bearing up; they near us, they possess us, and the soul is en-

girdled as it were in a ring of events touching her on every side, and communicating each one a stound of pain or a relish of joy. And there she lieth slaughtered by their many wounds or ravished by their many joys, and so she remaineth in a kind of trance of misery or of ecstasy, till the resurrection morn. She dwelleth evermore in the ethereal temperament of sweet recollections and sweet anticipations, brightened into the brilliancy of present enjoyments, without any touch of their instability and grossness—the spirit as it were of every past excellence and the spirit of every future excellence drawing near, and holding communion with our spirits;—or else the sorrow of every past sin, and the bitter twang of every past indulgence, the gall and wormwood of every dalliance with levity and folly and lust, the daughters of unrighteousness, the remorse of every crime, the sting of every untamed passion, and the thirst of every raging appetite, all these come down from the past; while from the cloudy future come bearing up the mist of every prejudice, and the gloom of departed honours, and the grief of happiness for ever foregone, and the terrors of hopelessness and the agonies of despair—the spirits of all the furies which people hell, with the legion which peoples this world, come together to revel it upon our disengaged soul—those that dwell back with conscience, those that dwell forward with fear, come lanching down to make a prey of our poor unregenerate soul. It seemeth

to me as if the spirit, when it left the body, and did no longer tabernacle or converse with matter, hath its conversation with the spirits of all past events in its experience, and all future events in its anticipation, and doth lie diffused over them all in a purest heaven of delight or a saddest hell of grief, according as they are good and hopeful, or bad and gloomy. Sensation, that clouds the memory of the past and dims the anticipation of the future, is no more. The present world is no more, the animal part of man is no more, the knowing part of man which held converse with the accidents and changes of this world is no more. Nothing is left but the moral and spiritual part of man, to make the best of that knowledge of eternity and the Eternal which it hath, of that love or hatred of eternity and the Eternal which it hath. It lancheth out of the world of sensual pleasures, out of the world of visible beauties, out of the world of proud ambitions, out of the world of avaricious accumulation, out of the world of manual and instrumental employments—And whither is it gone? into the spiritual world, whither nothing of all this can follow; and what remaineth but disappointment, tedium, shame, confusion of face, and every spiritual agony; unless while living in the midst of these same worlds of occupation she was not blinded and befooled and brutified by them, but kept a sacred reverence for her moral and spiritual part, reserving the best of every feeling, and the essence

of every thought, and the first fruits of every enjoyment, to God her creator and her preserver, and soon to be her Judge.

Such are our views of the state of the soul after death, drawn for the satisfaction of the greater number, from observations made upon the soul in her present condition, and which we may now confirm for the special edification of the Believer by revelation, so far as it enters into this mysterious subject. Here must stand, in the first place, the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, revealing their several fates after dissolution, which are to be conceived as emblems of the repose and fiery torture their spirits did endure; the promise to the penitent thief upon the cross, of being that very night in paradise; the entrancing of St. Paul, when he beheld and felt things unutterable; the visions of John, in which he beheld the blessedness of the saints; and the constant allusion through the books of the New Testament to the judgment and coming of Christ as immediately at hand; of which more hereafter.

All these passages give one reason to suppose that, besides the sort of passive consequence of death described above, there may be some consequences of an active kind which we are not able to comprehend; that there may be faculties by which our spirits may taste the communion of other incorporate spirits, that they may be introduced to the angels and cherubim and seraphim of glory, and by them conducted to their balmy seats of bliss—borne along with them through airy

space on errands and behests of God, taken into their pleasant associations, and trained like a younger sister in all the happy avocations of their being; or that the righteous may be seperated to a settlement of their own, to have spiritual enjoyment with each other, of which we cannot have the shadow of a thought—while, on the other hand, the souls of the wicked may be delivered up to the mastery of spirits reprobate, and left in their disembodied state to their mercy, to be by them used and abused in ten thousand ways, to which the material earth is altogether strange. But into these regions, which belong, as hath been said, to the poet and the orator, the conductor of an argument hath not any right to enter.

During the long interval, therefore, from the stroke of death till the trump of God shall ring in death's astonished ear, the soul is, as it were, by the necessity of her existence, forced to engage herself with the work of self-examination and self-trial, according to the best standard which during life she knew. If she was enlightened upon the divine constitution, then, according to the rules thereof, she will examine herself, and soon ascertain whether she held it in reverence and took the appointed measures to obey it, or whether she cast it behind her back and trod it under foot. If, again, she had no revelation of God, but had to depend on the light of Nature alone, then she will try herself according to that light, and discover whether she made virtue or vice her delight, good or evil her god. If she

groaned under the bondage of false religion; and was deluded by superstition out of reason's hands; even then, whatever she believed in her conscience to be right, to that rule she will bring herself during this season of abstracted meditation. For in every country and state of mankind there is a line of division between the good and the bad, between the worthy and the worthless, which represents outwardly the inward sense which that people hath of a right and a wrong side of human character. By this, whatever it is, however imperfect, however weak, however erroneous, we judge that each soul of every kindred and nation and tongue upon the earth will be employed during the long intermediate state in examining itself, and suffering or enjoying according to the nature of its reflections.

Now, forasmuch as that man hath never been heard of, who could, in his cool, dispassionate moments, look back and reflect upon his life without a feeling of its unprofitableness, compared with what it might and should have been—forasmuch as that man hath never lived, whose trials and besetting ills did form to his reflective mind an apology for his short-comings and misdemeanours; but all men, since Adam, have condemned themselves before even their embodied soul, when they took themselves to strict inquisition—how much more will they blame, how much less apologize before their disembodied soul, when every temptation of vanity, when every blind of passion and every avocation of thought which the body

and the visible world cast in, is removed, and they are left solitary as in a wilderness, serious and sober as in the presence of God, stricken by death out of a thousand misleading visions, and overwhelmed with a sense of forlorn abjectness! Each soul thus immersed in its ruminations, plunged and absorbed in its own conscious being, must accumulate a vast sense of its sinfulness, and a fearful apprehension of the issue. Happy, happy those, who have strong-holds of faith into which to turn, and know of a Saviour from that conscious guilt, under which every one, Jew and Gentile, Scythian, bond and free, must feel himself oppressed. They can deal with their overwhelming feelings, and they alone. I do not say that they alone shall pass the judgment—that is another question, from which we studiously refrain. But surely they alone know in this life how that sinfulness is to be wiped away, and therefore, unless after death some perceptions of a Saviour should be revealed to the virtuous of other communions, of which we speculate not, they must lie absorbed in their heavy consciousness of guilt, with a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.

Now then, in these beds, all dissolved in fear, and some conscious of hope, the spirits of the departed lie; and shrouded in mortality, or absorbed back again into matter's various forms, remain the bodies of the departed, until the archangel and the trump of God shall sound the dread summons through the chambers of nature and the abodes of the separated soul; whence they shall come and

meet, and being once more by the power of God conjoined, these two antient comrades shall form again one conscious frame of being, and take their joyful or heavy way, every living mortal, to the bar and judgment-seat of God.

This digression, into the separate state of the soul, may seem to many out of place and out of proportion; but, besides being the only way of showing how the spirit comes up to the bar clothed in consciousness of the past, and able to acquiesce in the future, it doth also give truth and meaning to a form of speaking concerning judgment most common in the Scriptures, but most unfrequent in these our days. By us the judgment is always regarded as infinitely far off, whereas by the Apostles it is regarded as close at hand, just forthcoming. Paul, in describing the fate of those who were to be alive at the time, includes himself among the number—"We who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." And Peter and James and John, no less than Paul, give this second coming of the Lord in judgment a prominency and a frequency in their writings above almost every other consideration, and constantly appeal to it as the great fund of patience, and the great motive to continue in well-doing. Now the Apostles were not ignorant of the space which was to intervene, for they have prophesied of their own death, of the latter times, of the bringing in of the Jews with the fulness of the Gentiles, and of all that has happened since, and of much that is still to happen;

and yet, knowing of the ages to run, they nevertheless represented the end of all things as at hand.

We moderns have altogether departed from this manner of speech, and the second coming of Christ is lost from the number of our motives, because the day of judgment is placed afar off. Death must come, and many generations of men fill our room, and our ashes must be scattered on a thousand winds, and millennial ages must run their course, before the trumpet of the archangel sound to judgment. Now, while the day of judgment is thus set infinitely remote, and a state of existence is interposed where joys and sufferings they venture not to set forth, the mind will do with it as it does with death while it considers it at a distance, think nothing of it at all. For it is not the certainty of a thing which gives it power over the mind, otherwise death, which is the most certain of all things, would be the most influential of all things; whereas it is to most men less influential than a journey to a foreign land or the shifting of their residence at home. It is the frequent presence of a thought in the mind which gives it power, and that frequency will seldom happen to a thing that is not looked for till after a time. Present things, or things hard at hand, are what occupy the soul; and until death comes to be so regarded, it gets no purchase over our conduct. But when one is brought to a right view of his frailty and mortality, and every morning sets out as on a perilous voyage, every evening lays him down as into a grave;

then, though death be made no more certain than before, it comes to prevail over the things which are seen, and to draw the solemnity and carefulness of a death-bed hour over every scene of business and of enjoyment. So also of the judgment; while it is considered not only as behind death, but far, far beyond it, it will be as unmoving as death, and will not carry any weight, until, like death, it be brought into the fore-front of things, and have a chance in the fray of contending interests and contending emotions which passes in the mind perpetually. Shall we then preach the end of the world as at hand, and the sound of the trumpet as ready to awake us every morning from our beds, and the regeneration of the heavens and the earth as about to be revealed? The Apostles did so, who uttered those very prophecies which are all our security that the world is to last another hour. They knew the events that were to intervene, and they made them known to us; and yet you see they preached as if nothing were to intervene at all. But we, who do but lamely interpret their prophecies, are so built upon our interpretations, and so assured of the things we guess about, hardly two agreeing; that we pluck up heart, and cast off the daily apprehensions of the Apostles, and preach boldly, as if the world were to last out our day, and the day of our children, and of many generations yet to arise! This is one instance among many of the total inequality of our modern preaching to the Apostolic pattern, and how great scrip-

tural ideas have been completely lost in the heed which the churches have given to their sectarian distinctions.

This discordance, between the Apostolical and the modern theology, we confess, was the first thing that drew our attention to the state of the soul immediately consequent on death. And on pursuing it we were led into the speculations given above, which, whatever may be thought of their soundness, have the merit of giving truth and meaning to the Apostolic way of speaking, and, of putting into the hands of their successors, the same powerful weapon for arresting the attention of a careless world. We have another solution of this difficulty, derived from metaphysical considerations of the nature of Time; which is, however, too abstract and tedious to be embodied in this discourse. Only let it be observed, before passing on to judgment, that the general argument is in nothing prejudiced by the soundness or unsoundness of this digression, which was introduced solely to explain how the soul *might* acquire that consciousness of her acts, and that conviction of her deservings, which are essential in a culprit, before condemnation can pass upon him with any effect. Now this is a question of knowledge, not of justice, and therefore doth not prejudice the great argument on which we are engaged, and on which we now venture again with trust, by the help of God, to bring it to a happy issue.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART VI.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

HAD our occupation in this Discourse been that of the poet or the orator, we have now before us a subject which, for the magnificence of the scene, the magnitude of the transaction, and the durable effects which it draweth on, stands unrivalled in the annals of human knowledge;—and with which the powers of conception cannot be brought to contend. Imagination cowers her wing, unable to fetch the compass of the ideal scene. The great white throne descending out of heaven, guarded and begirt with the principalities and powers thereof—the awful presence at whose sight the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place for them is found—the shaking of the mother elements of nature, and the commotion of the hoary deep, to render up their long dissolved dead—the rushing together of quickened men upon all the winds of heaven down to the centre, where the Judge sitteth on his blazing throne—To give form and figure and utterance to the mere circumstantial pomp of such a scene, no imagination availeth. Nor doth the understanding labour less. The archangel, with the trump of

God, riding sublime in the midst of heaven, and sending through the widest dominions of death and the grave that sharp summons which divideth the solid earth, and rings through the caverns of the hollow deep, piercing the dull cold ear of death and the grave with the knell of their departed reign; the death of Death, the sprouting of the grave with vitality, the reign of life, the second birth of living things, the reunion of body and soul—the one from unconscious sleep, the other from apprehensive and unquiet abodes,—the congregation of all generations over whom the stream of time hath swept—This outstretches my understanding no less than the material imagery confuses my imagination. And when I bring the picture to my heart, its feelings are overwhelmed: When I fancy this quick and conscious frame one instant reawakened, the next reinvested, the next summoned before the face of the Almighty Judge—now rebegotten, now sifted through every secret corner —my poor soul, possessed with the memory of its misdeeds, submitted to the scorching eye of my Maker—my fate depending upon his lips, my everlasting, changeless fate,—I shriek and shiver with mortal apprehension. And when I fancy the myriads of men all standing thus explored and known, I seem to hear their shiverings like the aspen leaves in the still evening of Autumn. Pale fear possesseth every countenance, and blank conviction every quaking heart. They stand like men upon the perilous edge of battle, withholden from speech and pinched for breath through

excess of struggling emotions—shame, remorse, mortal apprehension, and trembling hope.

Then the recording angel openeth the book of God's remembrance, and inquisition proceedeth apace. Anon they move quicker than the movement of thought to the right and left, two most innumerous companies. From his awful seat, his countenance clothed with the smile which makes all heaven gay, the Judge pronounceth blessing for ever and ever upon the heads of his disciples, and dispenseth to them a kingdom prepared by God from the first of time. To their minds, seized with the tidings of unexpected deliverance, it seemeth as a dream, and they wonder with ecstasy at the unbounded love of their Redeemer. They wonder, and they speak their unworthiness, but they are reassured by the voice of him that changeth not. Then joy seizeth their whole soul, and assurance of immortal bliss. Their trials are ended, their course is finished, the prize is won, and the crown of eternal life is laid up for them in store; and they hasten to inherit the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, which are at the right hand of God. Again the Judge lifteth up his voice, his countenance clothed in that frown which kindled hell, and he pronounceth eternal perdition with the devil and his angels, upon the wretched people who despised and rejected him on earth. They remonstrate, but remonstrance is vain. It is finished with hope, it is finished with grace, it is finished with mercy; justice hath begun her terrible reign, to endure for ever. Then arise

from myriads of myriads the groans and shrieks and threnes of despair; they invoke every mother element of nature to consume their being back into her dark womb; they call upon the rocks to crush them, and the hills to cover them from the terrible presence of the Lord and from his consuming wrath. Such episodes of melting tenderness there will be at this final parting of men! such eternal farewells! but, ah! the word farewell hath forgotten its meaning, and wishes of welfare now are vain. A new order of things hath commenced; the age of necessity hath begun its reign; all change is for ever sealed.

This mighty crisis in the history of the human race, this catastrophe of evil and consummation of good, fortunately it is not our province to clothe with living imagery, else our faculties would misgive and fail. But if our divine Poet hath, by his mighty genius, so rendered to conception the fallen angels beneath the sulphureous canopy of hell, their shapes, their array, their warfare and their high debates, as to charm and captivate our souls by the grandeur of their sentiments and the splendour of their chivalry, and to cheat us into sympathy and pity, and even admiration; how might such another spirit (if it shall please the Lord to yield another such,) draw forth the theme of judgment from its ambiguous light, give it form and circumstance, feeling and expression, so that it should strike home upon the heart with the presentiment of those very feelings which shall then be awakened in

our breasts. This task awaits some lofty and pious soul hereafter to arise, and, when performed, will enrich the world with a "Paradise Regained" worthy to be a sequel to the "Paradise Lost;" and with an "Inferno" that needeth no physical torments to make it infernal; and with a judgment antecedent to both, embracing and embodying the complete justification of God's ways to man.

Instead of which mighty fruits of genius, this age (oh, shocking!) hath produced out of this theme two most nauseous and unformed abortions, vile, unprincipled, and unmeaning—the one a brazen-faced piece of political cant, the other an abandoned parody of solemn judgment. Of which visionaries, I know not whether the self-confident tone of the one, or the ill-placed merriment of the other, displeaseth reason and feeling the more. Ignoble and impious it is to rob the sublimest of subjects of all its grandeur and effect, in order to serve wretched interests and vulgar passions. Out upon such wretched stuff; out upon the age which endureth it. Limited the men are in their faculties, for they want the greatest of all faculties—to know the living God and stand in awe of his mighty power: with the one, judgment to come is the stalking-horse of loyalty; with the other, it is the food and spice of jest-making. Barren souls!—and is the land of Shakspeare and Spencer and Milton come to this! that it can procreate nothing but such profane spawn, and is content to exalt such blots and blemishes of manhood into ornaments of the age. Puny age! when religion and virtue and manly freedom have ceased

from the character of those it accounteth noble. But I thank God, who hath given us a refuge in the great spirits of a former age, who will yet wrest the sceptre from these mongrel Englishmen. We can betake ourselves to the "Advent to Judgment" of Taylor; "The Four Last Things" of Bates; the "Blessedness of the Righteous" of Howe; and the "Saint's Rest" of Baxter; books which breathe of the reverend spirit of the olden time. God send to the others repentance, or else blast the powers they have abused so terribly; for if they repent not, they shall harp another strain at that scene they have sought to vulgarize. The men have seated themselves in his throne of judgment, to vent from thence doggrel spleen and insipid flattery; but the impious men have no more right to the holy seat than hath the obscene owl to nestle and bring forth in the Ark of the Covenant, which the wings of the cherubim of glory did overshadow.

But, to return, our office is not to create forms for the presentation of the last judgment to the fancy, but to measure it by reason, and examine how it squares with the noble sentiments of justice which God hath implanted in our breast. Having already taken his constitution of government to task, it now remains that, in like manner, we take to task the judgment and the award which is to pass thereon. As to the manner of the judgment, we have already thrown out our conjecture in the preceding Part, and the preliminaries of it we have examined at length. It now remains that we enter into inquiry upon the matter

of it, or the principle by which decision is to be given. This is stated at length in Matthew, chapter xxv. verse 31:—

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

These six charities, upon which the destinations of the righteous and the wicked are made

to turn, seem at first thought but a slight review of human life, and but a loose inquisition into our obedience of the divine law; and we feel as if the tests of judgment to come should have been more consonant to the spiritual character of the divine constitution, turning more upon the perfection of Christian character, than upon six outward moral actions of charity and human-heartedness, which are hardly hid from the natural feelings of the most unfeeling savage. But when thoroughly examined, as we now, in dependence upon divine grace, shall endeavour to do, this will turn out to be the most thorough inquest into our faith and feelings and character, and the severest test of our obedience, which the Scripture contains among all its descriptions of this solemn event.

The six necessary consolations and supports of human life are bread, water, and clothing—health, human fellowship, and freedom to travel over the creation of God. Being abridged of any one of these demands, Nature complains; and being cut off from any one of them, she is miserable if she have no refuge in the hopes of the world to come. Without bread and water, life cannot endure for many days; without clothing, misery invades us at every pore, every modest, delicate sentiment is murdered, and the noble nature of man brought level with the brutes; without health, the countenance of man is transformed and his nature is disguised—pain possesses the place of enjoyment, and the selfishness of pain doth in the long run eat out the kindlier sympathies of

the heart. And what were man without friends or the fellowship of his kind? a miserable outcast, a helpless wanderer and vagabond upon the earth, for whom it were better to die than to live. And the loss of liberty, imprisonment in loathsome dungeons, and restriction from the natural freedom of our estate, for which every creature under heaven was made, is perhaps of all the others the most desperate calamity. For if Providence deny us bread and water and necessary clothing, then we can die in calm resignation to his will, and our misery is at an end; or if his visitations bow us down with sickness, then still it is the Lord which giveth, and the Lord which taketh away, and let his name be blessed. If our friends forsake us, we have still a resource in the friendship of God, and of him whom God hath sent to comfort the afflicted and the fallen. But that our fellow-men, worms like ourselves, should have power yielded them to shut us out from friendship and the face of day, and the sight of Nature's charms, to deal out to us our pittance of bread and water and wretched accommodation, protracting at pleasure the vile durance, and at will increasing the measure of our deprivations—this is a condition for humanity to be affected with, worse, it seems to me, than the other five; and, next to a disgraceful and violent death, the worst that can be laid upon enduring man.

Let these six states of existence, a hungered, athirst, naked, sick, a stranger, a prisoner, be regarded then not as six individual afflictions amongst the ten thousand which afflict this weary

world, but as being the six aspects of misery—the six evil stars under which the miserable pass their life. Go round the habitations of men, and examine into the several sources of their anxiety, and the several causes of their urgent labours, you will find that it is to keep at the staff's end these three necessities—hunger, thirst, and nakedness. Also, study the luxuries which are assembled into the shops and market-places of the city, you will find the most part for the accommodation or entertainment of the three desires, of food and drink and raiment, for which the earth is cultivated and the juices of her fruits expressed, and her animals stripped of their fleecy and hairy coverings. Again, go round the habitations of men, and mark the sources of their grief and bitter lamentations, you will find them to arise from loss of friends or balmy health; they are sick, or they are strangers to the beloved of their heart, whom God hath removed from the place where they were wont to dwell. Finally, go to the places appointed for the miserable, and what do you find? prisons where liberty is curtailed; hospitals into which the sick are received; asylums for the friendless and the orphans; tables for the hungry mendicants, and clothing for the naked and the destitute;—which induction doth prove the position stated above, that these six conditions, mentioned in the judgment, are, as it were, the six great perils of man.

For this same reason that these six conditions are as it were the six zones in the world of misery,

they become six regions into which the power of man consigns those whom it would afflict. They are the points on which human nature is vulnerable, and are fixed upon for that end by those who, from cruelty or for punishment, would trouble her condition—and further they cannot go in their measures against her well-being. For it is not in the power of man to disturb the seat of reason, which God hath kept secret from his reach; neither can he raze out the legends of memory, or deface the visions of hope, or stem the current of thought; he can only remove us from the dwellings of our kindred to a land wherein we shall be a stranger; and he can immure us in disgraceful bondage, and abstract from Nature her wonted supplies; he can dismember our bodies, and bring on sickness and disease by noxious confinements and unwholesome foods. If he were to go a greater length he would defeat his own end, for by death we should flee away and be at rest. Accordingly, if you study the annals of wantonly inflicted suffering, or enter into the criminal code of nations, you will find these six heads, mentioned in the judgment, to be a good classification of all the individual instances of infliction:—deprivation of customary diet, from the plenty and luxury of our ordinary life down to the limit of starvation; abstraction of personal comfort and domestic accommodation, down to the limit of nakedness; infliction of torture, to cause pain and sickness; exile from our native land to a distant inhospitable region; deprivation of our liberty, to the extent of immuring our persons and fettering our limbs.

The Lord, therefore, in these six brief instances, has not only grouped the calamities of human nature, but also the limitations of man's power over his fellow-man.

Now, into each of these six conditions he supposes himself to have passed under the eye of every man who is before him in judgment, and inquires into the treatment which he received at their hands; whether they did supply him when it was in their power, and comfort him when it was not; or whether they did utterly neglect him and basely suffer him to pine without help or consolation. Upon this, when the one class modestly decline having done for him any such charitable offices as he enumerates, and the other stoutly deny that they turned a deaf ear to the cry of his calamities, he explains that it was not of himself he spoke, but of the meanest of those who were his brethren:—"Inasmuch as ye did it, inasmuch as ye did it not, to the least of these my brethren, ye did it, or ye did it not, to me." The judge identifies himself with every one who is joined to him in a brotherly union, and identifies their evil or good treatment with his own, justifying to the last that love of his people, for which he suffered and died and sent his comforter; verifying all the figures contained in Scripture, of their intimate union with himself their living head, of their being his members upon the earth, in whose sufferings he suffered, and in whose enjoyments he rejoiced.

The meaning of the whole transaction is therefore this,—that Christ hath set on foot upon the

earth a cause to which certain others have associated themselves, and which they are striving with one accord to establish. In the prosecution of their object they are to encounter all the six forms of human misery, and to draw down upon their heads all the six forms of human trial—hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, exile, and imprisonment. In which encounter of stormy trial, they are to find in the world some who pity and assist them, others who neglect and despise them. By this mark the world is to be separated asunder, and acquitted or condemned in the great day of her responsibility. So that, in truth, this test, which at first seemed merely moral, turns out to be especially Christian, and contains, as we now proceed to show, the most discriminative mark between the friends and enemies of God, between the servants and the rebels to his Son's government.

For, as every man knows, deeds show the sincerity of words, and adversity proveth the true character of deeds; any cause will find coadjutors while it goes with the stream, but when it hath to struggle against it, none but true men lie to their oar. Therefore Christ propoundeth the true test of adherence to him and his cause. Six jeopardies he puts it in, and a seventh can hardly be found; he enumerates the orb of its perils, and then asks who hath stood by it throughout the entire round. These are the men, says he, for whom my Father hath prepared a kingdom from the foundation of the world; for the rest, let them plead as their fears and self-love may dictate, they

must betake them to the devil and his angels, whose service they preferred to mine. He examines who are standing at the end of the battle, or have fallen with wounds in their breast, scorning flight or base submission. These he numbers and unites in his triumph; but the rest, who joined not his standard, or having joined it, turned not out to his help against the mighty, or having come into the field, preferred flight or base desertion to noble death and triumph, he rejects and abandons to the power of that enemy whom they loved or feared.

There is no evading or counterfeiting of this test. Had he placed it in forms of belief, then every sound-headed student of his Word, who could logically extract the bearing of its various propositions, would have come off glorious, whatever had been the state of his affections or his morals. And no one but he could have come gloriously off: so that the busy multitude, who have not time accurately to try conclusions of doctrine; and the unlettered, who have not learning to consult the faculties and bodies of theological lore; and the unintellectual, who have not sufficient depth of mind to fathom their mysteries; and the wise, who have more sense than to meddle with their vain and profitless janglings,—would all have been excluded for the sake of some few headstrong persecuting dogmatists. I, for one, feel truly most happy and contented in my mind, that upon whatever future destiny is made to turn, it is not upon a refined and finical creed. Had it been made to turn upon what are called frames of the

inner man, or evanescent feelings of the mind, then I know not what a rabble of devotees and self-deluded enthusiasts would have rushed forward in the greatness of their self-confidence. You would have had them, from the cell of the crazed with religious dreams, and from the gloomy chambers of the fanatic; you would have had persecuting prelates and infuriated inquisitors all pleading the holy convictions of their minds. Every dreamer, every visionary, every self-deluded prophet would have come, and every towering confident of God and pharisaical judge of his fellow. The whole catalogue of severe monastics, who lived on remote and retired communion, and built presumption upon the intoxications of self-consequence, which their solitude and seclusion wrought within them—all would have come, claiming upon their deranged conceptions and fancied communions with God.

But as it is, the test reduces itself to that which alone can evince the reality of belief, measure the worth of service, and interpret the truth of feelings; namely, the trouble and the trial which we did undergo for him whom we profess to believe in, and to sacrifice to, and to feel for. It comes and makes inquiry whether for his sake we did encounter, when need was, the extremest rigours of life, neither felt ashamed of those who were called on to encounter them;—if the fear of public reproach, or the loss of liberty, or exile, or straitened conditions, if any of these extremes, or any of the degrees which lead on to them, were wil-

lingly met when the cause was for Christ and his followers. "Those who deny me on earth, them will I deny before my Father in heaven; those who confess me on earth, will I confess before my Father which is in heaven."

There is, therefore, no doubt that when these tests occur in the providence of God, they are touchstones for ascertaining true-hearted and faithful followers of the Cross of Christ. But it may be thought that there is a quaintness, if not a source of error and mistake, thus to reveal unto all ages and nations of men, a test of eternal judgment, which, it may be thought, is applicable only to those few times and places in which Christ or his members are suffering reproach and tribulation. But if we look a little deeper still, we shall find that the age or country hath not been, in which these six perils of human life have not deterred, and their six opposite advantages bribed, the world from the cause of Christ.

For those six conditions, be they sad calamities of Providence, or inhuman inflictions of man upon his fellow-man, are of all things the most terrible to be endured; and are avoided like the mouths of tigers and wolves, and other ravenous creatures. To escape from them is the delight, to fall under them the horror, of human nature. In every condition wherein we stand, be it high or be it low, there are constant temptations, beseeching us to rise a little higher and escape from some of the hardships with which they feel themselves to be threatened or encumbered. When-

ever we have a want or pain or any unquiet feeling, there is also a desire to escape from under its oppression; and when we are escaped from under its oppression, there is a constant desire to ward it off. Though I be not hungry nor thirsty, yet the fear of want moves me to embark in a thousand schemes and occupations; or there are a thousand luxuries which I have ingrafted upon the stock of these natural appetites of hunger and thirst, which I could not without pain think of resigning, and which I strive by many means to preserve. Though I am not naked, but have raiment and accommodation to my person more than sufficient, yet I have ingrafted upon the natural stock of shelter from the cold, a thousand articles of personal decoration and vanity, to lose which would cost me dear, to supply the consumption of which to myself and family is a constant source of my anxiety and toil. And though I am not a stranger, yet how am I puzzled and perplexed, lest I should become strange to my present friends, to keep my place in society, and my credit in the great world of reputation; into how many shifts of hypocrisy driven, into how many artifices seduced, and into how many schemes am I hurried! So that, without further enumeration, as has been already said, the desire to shun these six miserables, and to gain the six opposite enjoyments, may be considered as the six great impulses which keep the moral world revolving round. Therefore, either at hand or at a distance, either through immediate feeling, or through far

off, but oft-felt apprehension, these six conditions touch and instigate most part of our thought and activity.

With all which thought and activity to avoid the misadventures and calamities of life, the Saviour wishes himself and his cause to be interwoven; that we may take diligent order we in nothing do him wrong in effecting our escape, or removing our distance from these the vultures of our present state; but that we be more contented to fall into their jaws than to forsake his fellowship, seeing the one perils only the body, the other both soul and body for ever. His last judgment, which is to determine the happiness or misery of eternal ages, he would bring into close contiguity and comparison with those every-day judgments of our own, which determine only the comfort or discomfort of time. The life to come, and the life that is, he would bring into actual mixture in our wishes and schemes, that we may steer a good course, not till death only, but for ever and ever. The Saviour doth not require of us to rein in our desire of escaping privations; but to be more content with the privation, while he remains in his integrity within our conscience, than to have deliverance at the expense of mangling and defacing the image of God within our breast; in short, to prefer the worse to the better for his sake, and rather to suffer persecution with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

And whosoever is a true servant of Christ must needs suffer persecution, in some of these

six circles of suffering, even in this enlightened age and tolerant land. For, truly, though I am no enemy to the gradations of human life, nor setter forth of levelling doctrines, I must, in justice to the present argument, say this much, that the world and the Saviour like each other not; and that in any rank of life, especially in the higher ranks, if a man make a determined stand for his Redeemer, he will have need of courage and resolution to keep his ground. Perhaps those of his own household may prove his foes. For certain, the fashions of his rank will turn against him and treat him roughly; they will tempt, they will threaten, they will revile him; and in the end give him up for a wild and crazed mortal. If it fareth so to godly people in this generation—what think you must be their case in foreign lands, and what must have been their case in barbarous times, for which, and for all ages no less than for us, these tests of Judgment to come are given? The inimical world changeth the weapons without relaxing the zeal of its warfare against the saints; and though it use not these six precise forms of jeopardy, it useth others akin to these, which human nature is alike loath to undergo; such as discountenance of friends, malice of enemies; exile from our natural confidence and rightful place in the family or social circle, often absolute seclusion from their love and esteem. All which degrees and forms of evil the Saviour includes in these six ultimate perditions of our good estate, as the lesser is included in the greater; and all these, however

diverse in form to those mentioned in the text, are in substance the same, and will be taken in proof of our true allegiance to him and to his cause.

A little farther to expound the application of these six tests to the present times. I know that I speak to the experience of Christian men, when I say that, in their various avocations and spheres of life, they have a hard battle to wage with customs which bear against the truth as it is in Jesus; for into all departments of business, and into all the establishments and offices of life, there have crept habits which serve convenience at the expense of truth, and promote interest at the expense of honesty; so that there are some departments of trade in which it is hardly possible to move a step without the violation of Christian principles. Likewise into the manners and customs of life there have been introduced many acts and sayings of duplicity and disguise, to save appearances or gratify fastidious tastes. Vanity is flattered, compliments offered without desert, truth wounded, and falsehood propagated in jest; absolute falsehoods tolerated in the highest circles, and apologies without number, in which there is but a show or shadow of the thing pretended; calumnies vended in a thousand shapes of pleasantry, and, in short, all manner of dishonesty and vice permitted, so that it be dexterously covered with a veil of civility. Whosoever would come out from behind these screens of falsehood and shame, and play a true and honest part before the observation of heaven, may depend upon a deal of in-

convenience, perhaps some loss, certainly great contempt, if not dislike, as an invader of good old rules, and a libeller of most worthy social customs; and, till he is fairly understood, he shall have a tough battle to engage in. Now here again the six tests come into action, to encourage us in the strife with settled customs, and bear our constancy up with the assurance, that the little we lose in the judgments of men, and the advantages of life, will be a thousand-fold compensated in the gain we reap at the judgment-seat of God, and through the endless ages of eternity.

The test to be proposed at the judgment-seat is, therefore, when thoroughly looked into, no less than an account taken of the loss which every one hath been content to endure for the sake of Christ. It is a justification against the misjudgments of man, and a compensation for the losses of time. And thus, what looked a most appalling prospect to the best prepared, becomes, by this tender way of setting it forth, an encouragement to every disciple of the Cross in their various places, and a constant cheerfulness under the cloudy visitations of providence or the world. It is at once the most strict inquest that can be set on foot, and the most joyful retribution that can be presented to the suffering members of Christ; while to those who cause their trouble, it is the most fearful of all consummations, and to all who prefer the world to the word of God, it is a day of most terrible reckoning and revenge.

But besides the true bearing of the test which

we have endeavoured to set forth above, there are several collateral influences, which in a discourse of this kind we can but enumerate. By giving it this form, of evil done to himself or endured for his sake, the Saviour doth make himself to be the great turning point of the whole system of religion, and set to a side all attachments, however honourable or sincere, which do not rank under this supreme attachment, for which the places of eternity are to be given. All religion, therefore, which does without him or keeps him in the shade, is not only unsound in truth, but dangerous to live under; and however it makes a show for morals or honour or loyalty, is not the wedding garment with which to meet the Redeemer, and sit under the eye of the Judge. Also, by this way of representing the judgment, Christ makes common cause with the meanest of his followers, and covers with a divine dignity the head of every disciple, making them heirs and joint heirs and brethren with himself,—which binds them in a common union of mutual respect and reverence, each one of them having over him the canopy of the Most Holy, and being defended in his place by all the thunders of the judgment. And besides these advantages of mutual union and love, this description of the judgment day doth represent the tendency of our faith to draw down the obloquy of the world, which hath been in every age, and is still, so strikingly fulfilled; and should put the world upon its guard, how it dares to trouble one hair of a saint's head, or touch one of the meanest disciples

of the Saviour, seeing vengeance ten thousand fold lieth against all who mistreat them. And, lastly, it brings all the terrors of eternity to bear against the persecutors of his church, and all the blessings of eternity to bear upon the persecuted, in order that his word may be known upon the earth, and his saving health among the nations.

In sum, Christ supposes himself in the six extreme cases of calamity, and rests his cause upon the proof of our love which we then offer to him, just as in other attachments extreme cases are chosen to prove their sincerity. If you were asked, what test of friendship might be safely taken in judgment, you would name such as was given between David and Jonathan, between Damon and Pythias, between Pylades and Orestes, in the face of all suffering and loss. If you were asked for a test which might be relied on of matrimonial attachment, you would seek for such instances as of our royal queen, who sucked the venom from her husband's wound:—of filial love, you would take that of Ruth to Naomi; our Saviour upon the Cross to his virgin mother. If you were asked for a test of love, you would seek to strip it of all honour and advantage, of all form and appearance; try it with poverty and banishment and tribulation, and see how it would abide; as is done so beautifully in the old English poem of the Nut-brown Maid. In trial of attachment, men are wont to seek the extreme and perilous cases, and have a hankering doubt while any chance of selfishness is open; and therefore it doth evince both

knowledge of human nature, and sweet accordance with the principles thereof, that Christ should in the judgment take the same method of proving the attachment, which there has been in the bosoms of men towards himself.

But it may be said, there are many friendships, loves and domestic affections in the world, which though they have not been proved by fiery trials, are nevertheless to be held as genuine as if they had been so attacked; and if we are not to admit such into our enumeration of worthy instances, but insist for such terrible experiments, we must be content to remain ignorant of the truth, and to entertain a most inaccurate opinion of human life. If, then, without such experiment, we take every day into our good opinion infinite cases, presuming the best of good appearances, until we see reason to suspect a flaw, why should the Saviour set forth such extreme positions of trial as the only test which at the judgment-seat will be admitted?

To this important question, I reply, that it is not meant that none shall be passed at the great day but those whose attachment hath been proved by these extreme experiments; but that the Judge, who knoweth the heart, will dive into its secret parts, and discover whether our love was of that genuine kind which would have stood the test, or was prompted by sinister and selfish aims, by present and temporary ends. He will look into our life, and see by the smaller sacrifices made on Christ's account, whether we should have made

the greater. The Judge will not require that the test should have been taken by all, but will ascertain in all if their affection actually manifested was such as would have stood the test if his providence had offered it. It is our part, therefore, to be constantly upon the outlook; or rather, I should say, upon the insight, to ascertain whether or not our attachment be honourably determined by the indwelling qualities of the Saviour, and the indwelling qualities of those associated with him, and the intrinsic merits of the cause; and whether it would abide in the absence of outward grace and outward favour, and in the presence of every contemptible, helpless condition in which they might happen to be found. For this is the inquisition which the Judge is hereafter to make of us all.

Now, that every one is able to ascertain this matter for himself, I have not any doubt. If, indeed, we will shield ourselves behind mere knowledge and ineffectual faith, behind moral and social worth, or behind evanescent feelings, and think to escape under the protection of mere moral qualities, we must stand to the consequences, which cannot but be fatal, of setting God's tribunal at nought. But if we will set about the proper work of trying ourselves by the sacrifices we have made in Christ's behalf, and the sincerity of the same; by the test, in short, as it hath been applied above to human nature, in every form and condition of society; and if we will follow out the inquest with a concern proportionate to its importance, we may instantly and without a

doubt ascertain our competency or incompetency to stand before the tribunal of Christ.

In which most solemn of all personal inquests, to help the immortal soul which peruseth these pages, we shall now leave the justification of the form of process, in order to point out how the principle of it may be applied by any one to himself; after which we shall notice a religious prejudice and a worldly prejudice upon the subject of Judgment to come, and so dismiss the subject for one still more awful.

Though Christ in our kingdom be not maltreated after the manner mentioned in the text, nor any of his followers, at least in so public a way as to come under our eye, yet the righteous are ever and anon meeting from God's providence with trials of loss and with visitations of sickness, which are not far from the observation of those who care about such matters; and, seeing so much is to depend upon the help we have rendered to the disabled members of Christ, it seems to me that a Christian should go out of his way to find such instances, if he wish to put his calling and election to the proper test. If the people of God are not now to be met with in prisons, or skulking unbefriended in want of bread, water, and clothing, as they were a century and a half ago, they may still be found pressed with misfortune, or struggling hard to keep their honourable name, weighed down with poverty, or buffetted by the scorn and malice of the wicked. These it is our part with prudence to vindicate and assist, against those

who use them ill. And if of this form of ailment there is not much at present in the members of Christ, whose superior activity and good husbandry and good reputation do in the end secure to them prosperity, so far as that can be secured in this changeable state, certainly from one of the six tribulations they are never excluded, by their profession of Christ, viz. the sickness or sorrow of the flesh; so that here is always one standard to which we can make reference for the ascertaining of our acceptance in the day of the Lord. If we have been tender in our attentions, and ready in our offices around the sick bed of the righteous; if it went with our heart to hear them praise the Lord, and exalt the name of their Redeemer; if the devout state of their soul, and the frequent acts of their devotion, and the whole atmosphere of their spirit were so sweet as oft to remove us away from the midst of gay companies and busy scenes, make us happy to part the curtains of their sick-bed, and commune with them of death and everlasting life—As there is no better test of a pious man than to see him oft at the sick-bed of the pious, so there is no place where you will sooner discern the spirit of any man. The wicked will generally be silent, struck by the scene into cogitations of their own unprovided state; the worldly, who live in an honest, inoffensive way, but ignorant and thoughtless of futurity, will be ever suggesting hopes of speedy recovery, and schemes of healthy enjoyment; but the pious man will be ever endeavouring after

serious thought, suggesting pious meditation and impressing solemn moods upon every one present. Insomuch, that, judging by this single test, which is the only one of the six that remains in direct operation amongst us, we may conclude that those six things which are to be made the tests hereafter of the righteous, will be found, wherever they occur in the present life, to be the six best marks that could be chosen for determining a spiritual from a formal disciple of the Lord.

But, though we have only one of these extreme troubles of Christ and Christians presented to our eyes in these favoured realms, we have them all presented from a distance to our ears and our sympathies; and though we cannot ourselves make pilgrimages to their relief, we have those who are willing to undertake the hazard, and bear our offerings to the needful members of Christ in foreign parts. For, to the glory of God and the honour of this country, his chosen seat, we have members of every denomination of Christians, chosen and approved, and commissioned members of Christ, labouring in the midst of hunger and nakedness, and peril and sword, in every region of the globe; from whom, were you to withdraw your charitable sustenance, they would sink into all these six conditions of affliction. The Missionaries are Christ's mendicant and pitiful members, whose trying case and urgent labours are ever sounded in your ears. You may judge each one for himself, whether your sympathy with their services and privations, and your

readiness to succour them be such, as would lead you to perform the very services mentioned in our text, to Christ, or to the least of his brethren, if you saw them within reach in these six deplorable conditions. I allow that one may aid the missionary work who would not stand the fiery trial in these six perilous ways; but I can hardly allow the converse, that one who doth not feel interest in the success of the missionary work, but seizes every occasion to asperse it, would stand by the cause in such perilous extremes, and he has reason to doubt the sincerity of his professions.

To advert to more inward considerations, and refer the matter home to conscience: I am certainly within the mark when I ask, if you feel a cordial affection to Christ and his followers under the disrepute to which they are subjected, and can brave the names of Methodist, and Enthusiast, and Puritan, with which they are wont to be branded by the lords of the creation? If a Christian man for his master's single sake hath, under every envious veil, a higher place in your esteem than another, though he be loaded with favours, hailed by fame, and served by all the ministers of rank and state? If, when a strange man is presented to your knowledge, you do take cognizance of his Christian graces or his worldly dignities, whether you estimate him by his godly or his worldly estate? If you yourselves, in the discharge of your several powers, and the occupation of your several places, do consult for the promotion

of the Gospel, or for the advancement of your fortune, your favour, and your enjoyment?

These six conditions of misery we stated to be six points from which men steer a persevering course; and we now ask whether, in steering that course away and keeping aloof from them, you keep in view the saving of Christ's reputation as much as the gaining of the end agreeable to human nature? The tests to which each man is to bring himself, in order to ascertain how he shall appear in the judgment, are the sacrifices he doth make of his natural likings and peculiar advantages, lest the credit of Christ and his cause should be trampled upon in reaching them. We are all posting from hunger, thirst, nakedness, friendlessness, sickness and confinement, with what haste we may; we are all hastening towards the luxuries of diet and dress, the enlargement of friendship, our enjoyment and our liberty, with what haste we may; and the question is, whether in shunning the one and pressing to the other, we do make more account of Christ than of all the pleasure and the advantage which we have in view. Is there any bribe of money? for money is but the representative of the means and ornaments of life, which the test requireth us to underrate:—is there any bribe of rank and station and place? for these are only the representative of a well-befriended condition, which the test requireth us to underrate:—is there any indulgence or gratification of the bodily appetites? for that is only the

opposite of pain, which the test requireth us to underrate:—any enlargement of power? which is but the opposite of confinement; any, or all of these, which can bribe us into the oblivion of our Christian principles, induce us to forego Christ's favour, or bring contumely upon Christ's cause, or wound the conscience of Christ's meanest disciple? For, verily, if these things, which are but like the signals of danger and alarms of the approaching contest, do carry it over our Christian fidelity, it is not possible that we should stand against the actual trials, or stand by those who are under them; neither is it possible that God will acquit us at the Judgment, when he perceives that the world could array to us a treat which was more engaging than Christ in all his honours, and how much more engaging still than Christ beset with all the six evils mentioned in the judgment!

I have reviewed what I have written above, respecting the question itself, and respecting the immortal soul which peruseth these pages; yet I cannot, I dare not extenuate any thing of its severe and solemn purport. It is not equivalent to the letter of the revelation; nor such as an apostle or a prophet, or Jesus Christ, the tenderest, best friend of man would have denounced against this generation. Therefore I must go on with my heavy task, and solemly declare that this protocol of eternal judgment cuts off from all hope those who hope on grounds not distinctively Christian. It turns singly upon the services done to Christ and to his cause. It makes no allu-

sion to sweetness of natural disposition, goodness of natural temper, attainments in knowledge, public spirit, good name, or noble deeds. The only thing mentioned is a tender interest in Christ and his suffering members. Therefore, all ornaments of this world, and all social qualities, cannot of themselves avail. In every Christian country where the knowledge of Christ is held forth, the people must be divided into two classes —those who esteem it in their hearts, and are willing to undergo the six perils of life for its sake, and those who hold it cheap, or make a form of it, but when times of trial and temptation come, straightway fall away. This is the present division that will make final decision; and this of all present divisions is the only one that will last eternally. I judge this of the utmost importance, and would impress it with all my ability; for the age, through the public favour which religion hath, is grown full of profession and approbation of the faith, and vehement down-crying of all blasphemy and opposition, while at heart, we fear, it is lukewarm to Christ for his own sake; and were he to appear hungry, naked, in rags and in prison, would not abide long in its constancy. Because there is no call for us to make these stands upon the extreme edges of misery, we need the more to try ourselves internally with vigilance, in order to discover whether, for the esteem that in our rank of life follows good and serious courses, or from the hereditary reverence of what our fathers reverenced, we continue our constancy; or whether,

like our fathers, we should be able in case of need, to suffer the loss of all things for his sake —forsake father and mother, and brother and sister, and our own life also, that we might be his disciple.

It amuses me much to see on what grounds they take themselves to be good, responsible Christians; or rather, I should say, it chills my blood to think what hosts of men are self-deceived, when I look to the nature of these awful tests. There are high-toned men, who make a joke of the meanness of Methodism, and call their churches a sort of shops, by contradistinction with other religious fabrics; there are a multitude more, who are taken with the wealth and splendour and state of religion, feeling solemn moods of mind under "fretted arches and long-drawn aisles," and the parade of form and ceremony, and the touching influence of melodious sounds; but cannot find these solemn touches of soul, under the mean, unformal rites of other places. Now, I say, that these men cannot look, cannot seek to pass this awful muster of the judgment day. It is not Christ dismantled, but Christ invested, that they fondle; it is not Christ's hungry and thirsty members, but Christ's goodly raiments, that take them with rapture, and they would shun the first summons to visit a poor disciple in a prison—and they would scorn to worship Christ in a conventicle. Now, I must not be mistaken because I utter unpalatable truth, as if I looked sour on stately services or ample ceremonies. If they have a right meaning, and serve good ends

of tuning the mind, let them be prized according to their worth. Neither do I disparage mere sublunary and moral accomplishments, but am much gratified wherever I find them to consist with honesty of heart. But I say that these will not pass the solemn tribunal, if we are to take the measure from these verses which are before us. There must be a strong and decisive attachment to Christ and to the cause of Christ, however meanly it may be arrayed, however loudly decried, however hardly mistreated.

It may be unpleasant to state the truth so firmly, but the truth must be spoken in a case where the eternity of each soul that readeth is concerned. Therefore be it understood, that no accomplishments of body or of mind, no attainments in the favour of princes or priests or the sons of men, will countervail the crime of undervaluing the humblest, meanest servant of Christ, when he is known to be such. Whosoever hath rejected him or his, he will in that day reject. I do, therefore, in conformity with the law of judgment, separate from hope all who have lived in a Christian land, but have not made it the object of their life to watch over the interests of Christ, to whatever else they may have devoted themselves. If they have turned aside from the sanctuary where his name is praised, or from the society of the righteous, to whom his interests are dear, to whatever else they may have devoted themselves. I take no apology; statesmen, legislators, nobles, royalty itself. All who are to stand

before this judgment-seat, are to answer upon this count.—If they dealt mercifully by the members of Christ, and righteously by his holy cause, or if they neglected both, giving heed to other concerns. It is summary, and nothing may be pleaded in excuse or arrest of judgment. Occupation with other matters, and ignorance of this; the high sphere of rank and business in which we moved; the stream of custom carrying us past these trifling objects—nothing will be admitted in extenuation of the capital crime of having postponed the concerns of Jesus Christ to any other which are consulted for by the busy world. He who made and preserves us considers himself to have the prior claim, the foremost claim of all; which claim having made in due form, in most gainful and gracious terms, if we reject it, he will hold us guilty, guilty, whatever be our character and conduct in other respects.

They may put forth the plea, that Christ and his people were not by them found subjected to the six perils of human life, saying, "When saw we thee, or any of thy people, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, friendless, or in prison, and did not minister to you?" still this plea, though it may be veritably put forth, will nothing avail those concerning whom we speak. The purport of the question is—Did you make common cause with me and mine, or did you not? If you were not for me, then were you against me. What tempted you to go against me, but the superior respect you had for the things of

time, and the approbation of your fellow-men? You rejected me before men, therefore will I reject you before my father which is in heaven. What was it that eclipsed my cause from your sight, and made it seem paltry and insignificant? it was the splendour, in which you decked the things of sense and sight, that made me and mine fade out of your vision. Ye would not have me to rule over you; ye trampled my holy law under your feet; ye crucified me afresh; ye put me to an open shame. Ye had no lot nor part in me at all. Begone, begone to those in whom you had your delight, and carry thither the ornaments in which you decked your body and your mind, for the admiration of all except your God.

But while the judgment is so stern to the insincere and the unfriendly, mark how considerate it is of those who are really sincere. It is not the value of the service done to him, but the purity of the motive from which it is done, to which Christ hath regard. The pledges he takes of allegiance, the services he asks, are of the cheapest and commonest kind; a little bread, a little water, a little raiment yielded to the utmost necessity, a sick-bed visit, a friendly action done to the stranger, a consolatory visit paid to the prisoner; which actions, though, as hath been shown, they be the best tests of sincerity to his cause, yet, being the smallest offerings in respect of value, are within the power of almost all but those who need the supply. In this is shown again the triumph of heart over outward form, the supe-

riority of intention over outward action. The Gospel is to the poor, from its first opening to its last winding up, seeing it is in the power of the poorest to perform these offices no less than of the rich. Had any thing but the cup of water to a disciple in the name of a disciple been called for, a large body of disciples, who have in all ages proved themselves the most stable, would have been excluded. But Christ, with his usual tenderness to low estate and perfect equality of privilege to all, puts the several tests of judgment so as altogether to exclude diversity of rank and dignity and place. Oh! had it turned upon the value of the offering we laid upon his shrine, had it turned upon the severity of our sufferings, or the extent of our labours, then how happy would many have been on their death-bed to compromise the matter at the price of their entire fortunes; in the wane of their life to have compromised the matter by ascetic severities; or during the prime of life to have undergone all the six conditions enumerated in the text, and reached heaven as a Fakeer or a Mahomedan or a Catholic hopes to reach it. In several passages of Scripture, descriptive of the judgment, the condemned are set forth as pleading rank and station and high services in his church, acquaintance with the Judge during his personal ministry, earnest entreaty for mercy; but with a high indignation every plea is rejected, save this alone, that we were not ashamed of the low estate of Christ or his people, but went into them and ministered to their distresses; and did

not despise the lowliest offices for the sake of Christ, nor refuse the care of the most destitute who belonged to him.

Now that in this exposition of the eternal judgment I have spoken so much of *sacrifices* on Christ's account, it seemeth to me safe (although I think my meaning cannot possibly have been mistaken) to put in this saving clause—that large sacrifices of place and honour, large endowments for his service, large exertions for the cause of his church, will not avail to procure acquittal at that inflexible judgment, unless sustained and borne out by a righteous and holy life, and the purest acts of mercy and benevolence. There are amongst us eloquent Christians, and public spirited Christians; Christians who brave for the Saviour the cold sneers of the senate-house, and the scowling suspicion of the disaffected to Christ; Christians, likewise, who give largely of their substance to religious institutions, and others who cross the ocean and gird the world round with voyages, and penetrate pathless deserts, and lay them down and die beneath scorching suns, scathed and shrivelled up prematurely by desert and tropic winds—all for the sake of Christ. But all this will not avail alone. A few ages ago, there were crusaders, bravest of the brave; and severe anchorites, "the moss their bed, their drink the crystal well;" and nuns, who devoted stainless virginity unto Christ; and missionary Jesuits, who girded the world with their journeyings, and scaled to the very right hand of royal supremacy,

and polished the savage denizens of the forest, who live not in habitations of men, but upon trees like the fowls of heaven; and there were belted warriors, and knights of noble chivalry, and princes of royal line who founded and endowed whole abbeys and domains—all for the sake of Christ. But all this will not avail alone. And in the Apostolic times, the most glorious far in the history of the church, there were those who could speak with the tongues of men and of angels in behalf of Christ, who had the gift of prophecy, and understood mysteries, and had faith to cast out devils and do many wonderful works, but who, from want of righteousness and charity, were as nothing, whom the Saviour says he will cast away with most sovereign indignation from his presence.

That none of these splendid acts of self-devotion will purchase a right to acquittal at this holy tribunal, being signs either of holiness or of enthusiasm, is manifest from every part of Scripture where the judgment is described; which, though we have not quoted them, we have endeavoured to weave into this exposition. Every word and secret thought, no less than every overt act, are to be called into question. Large catalogues are given of the affections and works which sink the soul into everlasting darkness; and these six tests which pass us into heaven, are, as hath been often said, no less than the six ultimate acts of devotion and obedience, the six most unequivocal marks of true disciples and servants of Christ. So that, in fine, it comes in other words

to this virtuous issue:—that nothing will avail but distinct, well-defined acts of personal holiness; distinct, well-defined renouncements of evil habits; distinct and well-defined triumphs over natural appetites, and forbidden customs—the purifying of the soul and the dedicating of the life to Christ. Nothing, to be particular, but the abandonment of the works of darkness, which are these:—fornication, wickedness, covetousness; maliciousness, envies, strifes; deceits, malignities, whisperings; backbitings, hatred of God, despite; pride, boasting, evil inventions; disobedience of parents, breaches of covenant, darkening of natural understanding, want of natural affection, implacableness, unmercifulness. The bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are these:—love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; faith, meekness, temperance; virtue, knowledge, patience, brotherly kindness, and charity. This crucifixion of the old man with his corruptions and lusts, and regeneration of the new man in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, not only evidenced to the world in outward acts of zeal and piety, but evidenced to God in the inner man of the heart, and to ourselves in a conscious love of God and of Christ; a restless longing after sanctification, a constant frame of repentance, prayer, and humility, with a bearing and resting upon the promises of God and the inwrought graces of his Spirit,—this, no less, is the form of life and character which will pass the great seat of judgment, and find favour in the sight of Christ our Judge.

I should here conclude the article of Judgment, but that I think it incumbent on me to notice two erroneous strains of feeling with respect to it, the one popular within the church, the other popular without.

This same justification at the last day, which, in the passage chiefly referred to, is made to depend upon our works alone, is often ascribed in Scripture to our faith—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only-begotten Son of God." "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in me shall never die." Now, to understand how these consort with what hath been already said, there needeth only to be remembered what was proved at large in the Third Head of this Discourse, that it is through faith in Christ, those six charities of life, that grave speech, and those pure thoughts are to be engendered, upon which the stress of Judgment to come is laid. Unless Christ be received into our hearts as the messenger sent from God to teach us, we never can be obedient to his discipline; and, as hath been showed in the place referred to, until he is received as our deliverance from self-accusing conscience, we shall never make such progress in his ways as will enable us to pass the great reviewal of our life. So that, to

all attainments in the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus, strength and constancy of faith must contribute.

It is vain to think there can be any fruits without faith, or that the faith God prizes will be dormant without fruits. Therefore if we have had genuine faith, there is no need that we should skulk from inquisition behind its screen; if we feel disposed to do so, it is proof positive that it was not genuine. If it hath been such faith as Christ sets store by, then by the fruits it will have displayed itself, and the knowledge of these fruits will make it manifest. Now it is these fruits which God bringeth to light; and in bringing them to light, he doth take the only method of bringing our faith to light. So that, if faith have not served its office before that time, it is a dead letter then; and if it have served its good office, there is no need to make words about the matter. The question at present is, whether we believe or disbelieve, because to disbelieve Christ, with all his commendatory graces and benefits, doth indicate a rebellious and debased spirit, most unsafe to die and go to judgment with. But the question hereafter is not, *Do* you believe? but, *Have* you believed? to ascertain which question, the heart of the party is bared, and his life unrolled; and if it appear to the Judge unequivocal, he stands acquitted, if not, he stands condemned.

Notwithstanding the clearness of these principles, and their coincidence with all which Christ and his Apostles have written both of judgment

and of faith, I am convinced, from the constant demand of the religious world for the preaching of faith and forgiveness, and their constant kicking against the preaching of Christian morals; the constant appetite for mercy, and disrelish of righteousness and judgment; or if righteousness, it be the constant demand that it should be the imputed righteousness of Christ, not our own personal righteousness; from these features of the evangelical part of men, I do greatly fear, nay, I am convinced that many of them are pillowing their hopes upon something else than the sanctification and changed life which the Gospel hath wrought. Let no one mistake me, (for though I care little about the mistake on my own account, I am too much concerned for the sake of others in the success of this argument to wish to be mistaken) as if I advocated salvation from the wrath to come upon the ground of self-righteousness. But this I argue, and will argue, that unless the helps and doctrines of grace, deservedly in such repute, unless the free forgiveness purchased by the death of Christ, the sanctification by the work of the Spirit, and every thing else encouraging and consolatory in the word of God, have operated their natural and due effect in delivering our members from the power of sin, and joining our affections to Christ and his poorest brethren, and of working deep and searching purification within all the fountains of our heart; then it will only aggravate our condemnation, ten times, that we have known, that we have believed, that we have prized these great revelations of the

power and goodness of God, and insisted with a most tyrannical and overbearing sway, that our pastors should hold on pronouncing them unceasingly, unsparingly Sabbath after Sabbath. I greatly fear, I say again, that this modern contraction of the Gospel into the span of one or two ideas, this promulgation of it as if it were a drawling monotone of sweetness, a lullaby for a baby spirit, with no music of mighty feeling, nor swells of grandeur, nor declensions of deepest pathos, nor thrilling themes of terror; as if were a thing for a shepherd's love-sick lute, or a sentimentalist's Æolian harp, instead of being for the great organ of human thought and feeling, through all the stops and pipes of this various world; I say, I fear greatly lest this strain of preaching Christ, the most feeble and ineffectual which the Christian world hath ever heard, should have lulled many into a quietus of the soul, under which they are resting sweetly from searching inquiry into their personal estate, and will pass composedly through death unto the awful judgment!

Now what difference is it, whether the active spirit of a man is laid asleep by the comfort of the holy wafer and extreme unction, to be his viaticum and passport into heaven, or by the constant charm of a few words sounded and sounded and eternally sounded about Christ's sufficiency to save? In the holy name of Christ, and the three times holy name of God, have they declared aught to men, or are they capable of declaring aught to men, which should not work upon men the desire and the power of holiness? Why then

do I hear the constant babbling about simple reliance and simple dependance upon Christ, instead of most scriptural and sound-minded calls to activity and perseverance after every perfection. And, oh! they will die mantled in their vain delusion, as the Catholic dies; and when the soothing voice of their consolatory teacher is passed into inaudible distance, Conscience will arise—with pensive Reflection and pale Fear, her two daughters, to take an account of the progress and exact advancement of their mind. And should she not be able to disabuse them of their rooted errors, they will come up to judgment; and, upon beholding the Judge, march forward with the confidence of old acquaintance, and salute him, "Lord, Lord;"—and when he sitteth silent, eyeing them with severe aspect, they will begin to wonder at his want of recognisance; and, to aid his memory, make mention of their great advancement in the faith; "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But how shall their assurance stagger back, and sink them spiritless into uttermost dismay, when the Judge, opening those awful lips, upon which hang the destinies of worlds, shall profess unto them, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity!"

Now, upon the other hand, while I deal freely by the prejudices of my religious brethren, I do but introduce myself with the better grace to

speak as freely upon the prejudices which the less spiritual part of the world have upon this awful event; who, while they profess to believe in Christ, do advance into an equal place within the temple of their thoughts many other objects of admiration and affection, at whose shrine they offer incense, so that after a life spent in giving him only a republican share of their regards, they cannot see how in the end he should sit supreme, the Lord of judgment and of fate. Nor will they cease to wonder that he should be so advanced, until they come to recognise him as the representative of God, the all-beholding sovereign, before whom every action should bow the knee—the all-hearing auditor, into whose ear every word should breathe its confession—and the all-conscious fountain of understanding, to whom every thought should acknowledge its obligations and perform its homage. But things being accounted of, as they shew to the eye of blinded nature, and not brought to the law of God, to be there weighed in the balance, it cometh to pass, that many principles in themselves amiable, but yet not so excellent as the love of God, are taken to the heart, and many services praiseworthy in themselves, yet not so exalted or enlarged as the service of Christ, are followed after. Now, those who know no better than as blinded nature teacheth do offer no contempt to God in not using his noble discipline and guidance of the soul, which they know not; and if they do reverence to the good instincts which he hath im-

planted within their breasts, I do think that the amiable sentiments of nature and the praiseworthy pursuits of the world will stand them in stead before the Judge of all. But not so to us, who have had the horn of God's treasures emptied into our lap, and the oil of his consolation and joy poured over our head, and have rejected the use and blessing of them, to follow after nature's and the world's ruler; not to us will they stand in any stead! For, are we not bound to listen unto the voice of Him who made us, even though not bringing a gift; and is it not guilty in the creature to spurn his parental creator and preserver, when uttering his good will? how much more obligated to receive him kindly, when bringing ten thousand institutions of good, and bonds of tender love! how much more guilty, if we turn a heedless mind and a callous heart to his offerings, and spurn him from the tabernacles where he keepeth us, and which he would fain overshadow with his grace!

Thinkest thou then, my brother, because thou art following after stainless honour, diligently avoiding all meanness and untruth and ignoble ways; or, because thou art following after honest traffic, diligently shunning injustice or wrongous advantage or usurious gains; or, because thou art following after the liberation of men from political thraldom, fighting in thy courses against corruption and oppression, and the rod of tyranny; or, because thou art following after pure and blessed philanthropy, visiting prisons and dun-

geon-glooms, and midnight revelries, and sickly hospitals, and doing thine utmost to medicate the natural maladies and self-inflicted wounds of human life; or, because thou art escaping out of the sphere of vulgar ignorance, to bask above its cloudy region in the everlasting beams of truth and knowledge, and bringest tidings, to the wondering throng, of things yet unattempted and unknown—Thinkest thou, my brother, that for one or all of these good and noble affections and pursuits of thy soul, thou shalt not be challenged by thy Creator, whose authority thou didst not regard in thy manifold avocations, and to whose glory thou didst not give the praise of all which he put it in thy heart to think, and enabled thy hand to perform? If thou dost, thou judgest far, far amiss, and hast need to be disabused by words of counsel, which for thy soul's sake I now beg leave to offer thee.

These excellent and amiable pursuits, which Nature prompts to with a voice less or more distinctly pronounced in every breast, and which call forth the good parts of her consciousness, and draw out the admiration of others over the head of envy and every bad principle, are worthy of all your estimation; and may his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth who would enter into argument against them! Now if God did withdraw your footsteps from such high walks of virtue, I would hesitate once or twice whether it was better to listen to him or not. But, seeing he doth but lift another voice in harmony with Nature's voice in

their behalf, and superadd to the rewards from within and from without a greater reward from above; and, that you may not by obstacles be impeded, or by discouragement be downcast, doth offer you every aid and needful instrument, and whisper into your ear that his Almighty power is on your side, and will enable you to surmount every let and hindrance,—why should you refuse to take him to your side as a coadjutor, or to acknowledge him as your leader, and render to him the glory of your success? Is it a hard thing for thee to march under the banner of him that is the Almighty? is it a debasing thing to acknowledge as thy chief the Lord of heaven and earth? is it a slavish thing to be indebted for counsel and for further strength to the Creator who gave thee thy present counsel and meted out to thee thy present strength? Nay, but, my brother, is it not a proud thing in thee to give him no acknowledgment for thine excellent parts of nature? And is it not a disloyal thing for thee to make a head for thyself, when thy Captain summoneth all fencible men to march to his help against the mighty? And in the little head thou makest for thyself in the battle, is it not most contemptuous for thee to leave the lines, and, like a vain, vapouring, unsoldierly bravo, go tilting on thine own pleasure and responsibility? Then at thy responsibility be it; and if by court-martial thou be condemned, whom hast thou to blame but thy proud and petulant self?

But I seem to myself to mince the matter with

the world in my wish, to embrace them with the brotherly tenderness of this argument. For upon looking at these virtuous avocations of men with a less complaisant and juster eye, I do perceive that they often exalt themselves into a head and leading against Christ, and become nestling-places for those high faculties of human nature which are too high to stoop to be counselled by him that is the Almighty. I do find your men of honour arching their proud brows at the harmless glories of a Christian; and your men accomplished in incorruptible honesty, presuming thereupon to claim a free passage into heaven, and setting at nought our self-veiling doctrines; and your public-spirited advocates of good government, I do find sneering upon the self-government of the Christian, and screening private delinquency behind public spirit, dying in the faith that mere patriotism will save a man, and requiring the same sentiment to be sculptured on their tombs. And your philanthropists, (be Howard for ever an exception, who appointed for the panegyric of his tomb, "In Christ is my trust,") I do frequently find magnifying their deeds and making them honourable, and placing their everlasting confidence upon their charitable works. And for Knowledge—she is as vain as the plumed peacock, and stretcheth out her neck on high, and calleth to the stars of heaven to magnify her greatness. The sons of knowledge, or fancy, having gotten a spark from heaven, or it may be from hell, make themselves gods, and say unto the populous world, What are ye without us?

Truly these, when accurately examined, must be pronounced broadly out to be no better than wicked idolators, each in his proper temple, of the idol that dwelleth therein, and despisers of the only living and true God.—And we behove to speak to them in sterner language than we used above.

Hear, then, ye despisers, and perish! Is it a less crime for a philosopher, a man of wisdom and understanding, to despise God, than for an ignorant and unlettered man? Is it a less crime for a sceptered monarch to despise the King of kings and Lord of lords, than for a labouring peasant or a poverty-stricken beggar, who earneth a poor pittance from providence? Is it a less crime for a speculative statesman, who knows and covets good government, to despise the government of God, than for a slave who knoweth only the government of the lash? Or for a man who knoweth the sacrifices of mercy, is it less crime to despise the inestimable sacrifice of Christ for mercy's sake? or for a man who sitteth in his house at home at his ease, is it a less crime to neglect to study the ways of God, than it is for low-born, hard-toiled, unenlightened men? Whence, then, in the name of sacred truth and justice, this whining, puling pity, that these sovereigns of their various spheres should be turned to the left with the throngs which they served to mislead? It is both bad philosophy and spurious sentiment, that the mind should shrink and misgive for their sakes, as if they were not the most privileged and therefore

the most responsible of men. Nay, verily, I am for swaying the other way, and pitying the poor ignorant, misguided man; the unlettered, untutored rustic; the wretches born under evil stars of vice, and bred amidst the contagions of wickedness. But my soul is like flint and steel against these proud, outrageous despisers of God, who, though nursed in the lap of his providence, and cast in the finest mould of nature, and basked on by the sunshine of knowledge, entertain for his ordinances a high despite, taste his blessings with ingratitude, and, but for Death the destroyer, would, I believe, set up themselves for gods, and lord it over the very spirits of their kind. No, no; we have enough of this sycophancy of the soul, this unbonnetting of manhood, and selling of even-handed judgment in time, to let it go further. Verily, these qualities, according to their estimable degree, have in time that estimation which alone they sought, and, having aimed no further, they will not reach any further. God will have a rewarding time for himself, a reaping time for righteousness and piety.

And *shall* not God have a reaping time for righteousness and piety? Shall science reward her servants with knowledge and with fame, with honour and with power; shall mammon reward his servants with wealth and pleasures; and temperance reward his servants with health and beauty; and honesty bestow trust; and affection find affection in return; and every grace of life have its season of gain, but God alone have no

opportunity of rewarding those who loved him and wrought for him and suffered reproach for his name sake, despising the rewards of mammon, ambition, luxury and pride, and affection itself, when they stood in the way of his honourable service! What hinders these noble spirits from regarding the Lord God Omnipotent who reigneth, and who is surely higher than they? Why do they not stretch out their hands to the tree of life, and live for ever? Are they too great to come under such a sovereign—too learned to learn from such a master—too well employed to have to do with such occupations—too exalted to deign a look from their several spheres upon the whole dispensation, except it be a look of scorn? Well, well! let them have their elevated places, and bear them bravely in their gallant courses, and nurse their enmity to God, and their contempt of his plebeian ordinances:—But let them bear the brunt of the judgment which they have braved, let them reap as they have chosen to sow. What is that to us, that we should whine and mope with melancholy over them more than over others?

I do not frown upon the distinctions of temporal excellence, which I rather love and admire as the ornaments of time; but I will not exalt the Genius of philosophy or the Muse of poetry or the Spirit of patriotism, much less will I exalt the base god of lucre, or the demon of pride and passion—above Jehovah, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Nor will I admit

into my mind that they shall shield their favourites, and keep them secure in rebellion against the God of all the earth, who alone doeth righteously. I think it patience enough on the part of the Most High to tolerate these, the idols and deities of our polished society; to tolerate them in their power, and their subjects in their idolatrous rebellion, for the length of life, and to stand by begirt with grace and mercy, holding out proffers of forgiveness all the duration of time. But, no; it is too much that He should yield them a place in his heaven, whence he cast out a more knowing, more powerful, more graceful, more proud spirit, and would not endure him an instant, but cast him out, and all those rebellious though high-minded intelligences, who since that time have usurped their several places upon the earth, and led astray those bands of followers, whom we do pity, but will neither encourage nor justify!

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART VII.

THE ISSUES OF THE JUDGMENT.

In the detail and defence which have been just concluded of the Last Judgment, we have entered into no particulars of cases; which were an endless task, and not convenient to the aim of a discourse, which is not meant to make the scene poetically or figuratively striking, but to prove it unto reason a fair and equitable transaction. Therefore we took up the very words of Christ's description, and showed how shortly and strikingly, yet how amply and severely, it brought to trial the whole scope of Christian obedience and disobedience. There is not in scripture any passage or expression so beautiful, so tender, so full of pathos, and productive of charity, in purport so perfect a criterion, so unerring a condemnation or so satisfactory an acquittal, as the few words which we have taken such time to explain, and explained so little to our own satisfaction. It will be observed by those who are of a logical and judicial turn, that there wanteth a link to connect the constitution of law, which we formerly explained, with this method of passing judgment upon the observance of that law. The judgment turns al-

together, or almost altogether, upon our personal attachment and personal sacrifice in Christ's behalf. And what connexion hath this with the keeping of the very pure and spiritual law of which we discoursed at large? To this question, materials for many answers are furnished in the body of the preceding description of the solemn scene. But there is such a beauty in this connexion that we cannot refrain from noticing it apart.

It will be remembered, that after trying the resources of human ability against the pure institution of God, we found it was not possible for conscience to acquit herself, and that she must give in, overwhelmed with helplessness and transgression. Upon a claim of right therefore she cannot take the prize, and you perceive it is not yielded in right of conscience, but as a boon for affection towards Christ. Now it will be further r membered, that in order to be delivered from this dejection and despair of conscience, no resource of human ingenuity was found available, and that we were fain to turn unto the Gospel of Christ as our refuge, and take upon mercy that which was denied to right. Then we proceeded to sift the Gospel of mercy to the bottom, and find out, whether a loose were thereby given to licentiousness and disobedience, and a broad shield of forgiveness cast over the delinquencies of men. From this inquiry we gathered, that the disciple of Christ and believer in salvation through his merits, was not set loose from obligation, or

delivered from one tittle of former obligation, but was brought under a new sort of obligation, and led into a new kind of obedience; that to all the native obligations of the law originating in its admirable adaptation to human circumstances, there are added all the affectionate and advantageous obligations of the gospel springing from the knowledge of God's love in Christ and the assurance of success through the Spirit; that Christ bound a new knot between the soul of man and his Maker, composed of a thousand interlacing ties, of which we cannot again afford to speak separately. Only this was the pith of the whole, that Christ was the intermedium, and that from him all this new life sprung, and to him it was in gratitude devoted; that we hung and were suspended on him, as a viceroy or vicegerent for God over the affairs of our soul's salvation; and that through this new condition, a plenty and joyfulness of obedience was yielded, which could by no other means have been extracted from the fallen nature of man.

Now mark, how well, to this new style and spirit of obedience, answer the style and spirit of the judgment! whereof the pith and marrow are placed in the strength of our attachment to Christ, which attachment is the spring, the nourishment, and the measure of this new obedience. To examine into that attachment is therefore as good as to examine into this obedience, for the one is like the stream which drives the other on; and their race is equal. There is a coincidence here

in itself so wise, that we confess we feel all that went before upon law and obedience to be in a manner riveted, and capable of holding fast.

Had the judgment been detailed as an investigation of individual actions (though it is that in the main)—had it been detailed as an acquittal given upon our being found commensurate with the demands of law and conscience,—then there would have been ground for that most fatal of all errors, that we are to win heaven by right. Or had our account been stated with its deficiencies, and balanced out of Christ's merits—then the next ruinous error, that we go joint with the Saviour in the matter of heaven, would have been generated. But being made to turn upon six evidences of affection and attachment, as if that alone were necessary to be ascertained—it is made for ever manifest, that hope of acquittal must be held exactly in proportion to our union with Christ; with which degree of union we showed that our degree of obedience or law-keeping was exactly commensurate. So that obedience, largest, strictest obedience is insured, while the way to it, the only way to it, is pointed out, and the two false ways to it for ever barred to all who will see truth and understand knowledge.

With this remark, which we conceive not only most necessary to complete the argument, but in itself the most important that hath been made from the very commencement of the discourse, we pass on forthwith to that awful subject which stands as the title of this part, the Issues of the

Judgment. From which we would shrink back utterly dismayed, were we not convinced that something must be said and done to present these subjects before the Court of human reason, else the blasphemers of this day, who make reason their stalking-horse, to come over the credulity of men, will utterly dislodge both the faith and the reverence of future things from the common breast, so that a new plantation of religion among the common people will in a few years become necessary. For, with all the exertions making in this day for religion's sake, at home and abroad, accompanied with the demonstration of much success, I am satisfied that religion is retrograding in many quarters. The enemy is strengthening also, if Christ be strengthening. There is a mustering, as it were, of both hosts, a gathering to the conflict. The enemy hath written Reason on his recruiting standard; and we would also write Reason upon the Christian standard, not only for the purpose of defeating his malicious aspersions, but for the justification of the truth, which we conceive to be this—That our religion doth not denounce the rational or intellectual man, but addeth thereto the spiritual man, and that the latter flourishes the more nobly under the fostering hand of the former.

I enter, therefore, into the unseen worlds which shall be built up for the habitations of the righteous and the wicked, in a cool, reasonable spirit, invoking the help of God to guide my steps; and whosoever will accompany me, I pray to do the

same, and not to resign himself to the guidance of my judgment, which is hardly able to guide myself. Upon the nature of these two several estates it is not easy to speak correctly; and a great deal of mischief has arisen from inconsiderate interpretations of the language of Scripture. Of how many light-witted men, unto this day, is the constant psalm-singing of heaven a theme of scorn; the fire and brimstone of hell, a theme of derision! And on the other hand, by how many zealous but injudicious ministers of the Gospel are they the themes of rhapsodies, which end in nothing but the tedium and disgust of those who hear! Now these two, amongst many others, are but emblems or signs, to represent the nature of our feelings in these several states of being, implying no more the existence of instrumental music or of material fire, than the name New Jerusalem implies that the righteous are to dwell in a city, or the name pit and lake of fire imply that the wicked are to swim for ever in a dark, deep abyss of spiry flames. Glorious bodies are not restored to the righteous only to strike a harp, nor imperishable bodies to the wicked only to suffer and not die. To the righteous they are given to renew the connexion between spirit and matter, which is productive even in this fallen world of such exquisite delight; and in order to meet the nicer capacities of these new formed organs, a new world is created, fair as the sun, beautiful as the moon, fresh and verdant as the garden of Eden. And around this new habitation of the righteous is thrown a wall

like the crystal wall of heaven itself, within which nothing shall enter to hurt or to defile. There shall be no sickness nor sorrow of countenance, and there shall be no more death. There shall be no more stormy passion, with its troublous calm of overspent rage, and its long wreck of ruin and havoc, which no time can repair. No wars, nor rumours of wars, and bloodshed shall never again spot the bosom of the ground; and rivalry shall no longer trouble friendship, nor jealousy, love; nor shall ambition divide states, which, be they commonwealths or royal sovereignties, will dwell in untroubled peace. The cares of life shall no longer agitate the bosom, and the reverses of life be for ever unknown. Hunger and thirst shall no longer be felt, and the heat of the sun shall not smite by day, nor the moon by night.

Yet will the happy creatures have enough to do, and to enjoy, though there be no misery to comfort, nor evil to stem, nor grief over whose departure to rejoice. Of how many cheap, exquisite joys are these five senses the inlets! and who is he that can look upon the beautiful scenes of the morning, lying in the freshness of the dew, and the joyful light of the risen sun, and not be happy? Cannot God create another world many times more fair? and cast over it a mantle of light many times more lovely? and wash it with purer dew than ever dropped from the eyelids of the morning? Can he not shut up Winter in his hoary caverns, or send him howling over another do-

main? Can he not form the crystal eye more full of sweet sensations, and fill the soul with a richer faculty of conversing with nature, than the most gifted poet did ever possess? Think you the creative function of God is exhaused upon this dark and troublous ball of earth? or that this body and soul of human nature are the masterpiece of his architecture? Who knows what new enchantment of melody, what new witchery of speech, what poetry of conception, what variety of design, and what brilliancy of execution, he may endow the human faculties withal:—in what new graces he may clothe nature, with such various enchantment of hill and dale, woodland, rushing stream, and living fountain; with bowers of bliss and sabbath-scenes of peace, and a thousand forms of disporting creatures, so as to make all the world hath beheld to seem like the gross picture with which you catch infants; so as to make the eastern tale of romances, and the most rapt imagination of eastern poets like the ignorant prattle and rude structures which first delight the nursery and afterwards ashame our riper years!

Again, from our present establishment of affections, what exquisite enjoyment springs, of love, of friendship, and of domestic life! For each one of which God, amidst this world's faded glories, hath preserved many a temple of most exquisite delight. Home, that word of nameless charms; love, that inexhaustible theme of sentiment and poetry; all relationships, parental, conjugal, and filial, shall arise to a new strength, graced with

innocency, undisturbed by apprehension of decay, unruffled by jealousy, and unweakened by time. Heart shall meet heart—

"Each other's pillow to repose divine."

The tongue shall be eloquent to disclose all its burning emotions, no longer labouring and panting for utterance. And a new orginization of body for joining and mixing affections may be invented, more quiet homes for partaking it undisturbed, and more sequestered retreats for barring out the invasion of other affairs. Oh! what scenes of social life I fancy to myself in the settlements of the blessed, one day of which I would not barter against the greatness and glory of an Alexander or a Cæsar. What new friendships—what new connubial ties—what urgency of well-doing—what promotion of good—what elevation of the whole sphere in which we dwell! till every thing smile in "Eden's first bloom," and the angels of light, as they come and go, tarry with innocent rapture over the enjoyment of every happy fair. Ah! they will come, but with no weak sinfulness like those three lately sung of by no holy tongue; they will come to creatures sinless as themselves, and help forward the mirth and rejoicing of all the people. And the Lord God himself will walk among us, as he did of old in he midst of the garden! His Spirit shall be in us, and all heaven shall be revealed upon us.

God only knows what great powers he hath of creating happiness and joy. For, this world your sceptic poets make such idolatry of, 'tis a waste-

howling wilderness compared with what the Lord our God shall furnish out. That City of our God and the Lamb, whose stream was crystal, whose wall was jasper, and her buildings molten gold, whose twelve gates were each a silvery pearl—doth not so far outshine those dingy, smoky, clayey dwellings of men, as shall that new earth outshine the fairest region which the sun hath ever beheld in his circuit since the birth of time.

But there is a depraved taste in man, which delights in strife and struggle; a fellness of spirit, which joys in fire and sword; and a serpent mockery, which cannot look upon innocent peace without a smile of scorn, or a ravenous lust to marr it. And out of this fund of bitterness come forth those epithets of derision which they pour upon the innocent images of heaven. They laugh at the celebration of the Almighty's praise as a heartless service—not understanding that which they make themselves merry withal. The harp which the righteous tune in heaven is their heart full of glad and harmonious emotions. The song which they sing is the knowledge of things which the soul coveteth after now, but faintly perceiveth. The troubled fountain of human understanding hath become clear as crystal, they know even as they are known. Wherever they look abroad, they perceive wisdom and glory—within, they feel order and happiness—in every countenance they read benignity and love. God is glorified in all his outward works, and inthroned in the inward parts of every living thing; and man, being ravished

with the constant picture of beauty and contentment, possessed with a constant sense of felicity, utters forth his Maker's praise, or if he utters not, museth it with expressive silence.

These light and ignorant wits laugh likewise at the pastoral innocency of heaven, at its peacefulness and quiet, and would transport amongst its bowers the bad activity and molestation of evil pursuits, which make so large a share of their enjoyments here below. They want ambition to stir up the sluggish soul, and pride to reward it. They want emulation, and envy, and contention, to set the spirit on edge, and triumphs and conquests to compose it again, with all the play of earthly bustle and activity. Vain sons of Belial! they understand not the nature even of present happiness, their wicked hearts misleading them from the truth. These turbulent affections constitute not the enjoyment of the present life, but its misery. Ambition is a curse to him who indulges it, racking his bosom and wrecking his peace, causing him to trample upon the necks of many, to forget sacred promises, to deceive, to flatter, to fawn, the successful leading to self-willedness and cruelty, the unsuccessful sinking into the lowest sink of shame. Contention, strife, and war, are incarnate demons, setting chiefest friends asunder, entering innocent homes, marring rural festivity, and drawing over the beauty of the earth the waste and havoc and sulphureous canopy of hell. There is a yearning in the bosom of man after quietness and peace; safety and security are the

two guardians of his welfare; gratitude and affection the two nurses of his happiness. Truth and innocency are the light of his soul; falsehood and deception its dubious twilight. It is a base satire on human nature to say, that without strife, contention, and dividing pride, she cannot be happy or great; and that bustle and restlessness are the elements in which she thrives. When are kingdoms happy and prosperous? When they have peaceful times, and worthy governors. Who are the great discoverers and sages of their species? Those alone who have consorted with meditation, and lived remote from contentious scenes. What do your men of business labour for? To rest in old age, and be at peace. What girds you with resolution to go through your daily toils? The peaceful happy home and family to whose bosom you retire at eventide. What is this, then, wicked men assert, as if there could be no activity, no manhood, no enterprise, no heroism, without cruelty and guilt; no delights of knowledge, of poetry, of philosophy, of affection, without emulation and vanity?—these are the poisons in the cup, not the medicines. Human society would die forthwith, were there not the healthy infusion of disinterestedness, justice, mercy, and love. There would be no relief for the unfortunate, nor consolation for the wretched, were there not other funds than self-aggrandizement and jealousy to draw upon: and I am well assured there would be none of that unresting industry in this our city, were we not the lords of

our peaceful homes; and there would be no such enterprise in the bosom of our youth, were there no happy undisturbed retirements to which, after a season, they might come home and be at rest.

Therefore I do appeal to the common sense and natural understanding of unsophisticated men, whereof these deriding wits have made shipwreck, if our heaven do not commend itself by the emblems with which it hath been shadowed forth—if its repose is not sweet to look forward to, from this sorely agitated scene—if the perfect honesty and confidence of all its people will not be a constant feast to us, cheated and disappointed upon every side—if the voice of the heart does not answer to its pictures of rural beauty and felicity—if the mind does not rejoice in the perfection of knowledge and fulness of understanding which shall be disclosed to its desires—if the whole soul doth not long for the paradise of joy, and the eternity of life wherein she will there be planted.

But that with all these accompaniments it will be a scene of activity, I have no doubt; activity both of body and of mind, that sensual and physical enjoyments will be multiplied manifold; that affectionate attachments will yield a thousand times more enjoyment; that schemes of future good will occupy our thoughts, and enterprises of higher attainments urge our being forward. Then will be the pleasure of the eye, but none of the weariness; the glow and glory of life, but not its pride; the thrilling joys of flesh and blood, but none of their odious lusts.

In the emblems of Scripture there is a city, which signifies active life—there is a river, which signifies refreshment—a tree of life, which signifies nourishment; variety of spontaneous fruit, which signifies gratification of the sense. The gates are not shut all the day, which signifies liberty. There is no night, which signifies no weariness nor treachery. There are the most beautiful gems, which signify wealth and splendour. In short, the Almighty hath planted and decorated the habitation of the just with every object that can captivate the sense, and every enjoyment that can satisfy the mind, with all that is beautiful and noble and good.

Thus coolly do I prosecute a subject which would sustain the loftiest flights, and call into action the strongest enthusiasm of the mind, because I would justify these great truths of our religion by an appeal to the cool reason and correct feelings of human nature, not commend them by high-wrought eloquence, or picturesque delineation. And I would now meditate with the same calmness and collectedness the dark side of futurity, praying you to suppress your fears, and listen with your reason and judgment alone, which are the only faculties of your minds, from which these several discourses of Judgment have asked a verdict.

Though the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, are on the same occasion thrice solemnly denounced upon the wicked by the most humane and gentle spirit of Christ; and every description of Judgment by Daniel and John

and Paul be in the same strain; still keeping them for a moment in our breast, we shall inquire into the condition in which a congregation of evil natures must necessarily find themselves, when all hope and possibility of amendment are removed. It is most manifest to any one coolly considering his own bosom, that if he were to give a licence to the evil that is within him, to the suggestions of malice and lust and passion, he would become hateful to himself and horrible to all around. If the fear of God were cast away, and the fear of man; if the rewards that attend honesty and chastity and peace were no longer known; if one, in short, had nothing to lose in life, no death, and no retribution after death staring him in the face; the lengths to which he would proceed are shocking to reflect upon.

Now this is precisely the state of things in the nether world. There is no hope, there is no end, there are no good beings to hold the balance against evil, and there is no restraining providence of God. Were there nothing more, I hold this to be enough to constitute the hottest, cruelest hell. I ask no elemental fire, no furnace of living flames, no tormenting demons, nothing but a congregation of the wicked, in the wicked state in which they died and appeared at the tribunal, driven together into one settlement, to make the best or the worst of it they can. Let every man arise in his proper likeness, clothed in his proper nature, which he did not choose to put off, but to die with; let beauty arise with the same pure tints which

death did nip, and wit with all its flashes, and knowledge with all its powers, and policy with all its address; let the generations of the unrighteous gather together;—and because of their possessing none of the qualities which God approves in his volume, nor caring to possess them, let them be shipped across the impassable gulf to some planet of their own, to carry on their several intrigues and indulgences for ever;—then here were a hell, which neither fire nor brimstone, nor gnawing worm, are able to represent. For, observe, it is such only in whom godliness could take no root that were transported thither, in whom selfishness carried it over benevolence, lust over self-control, interest over duty, the devil over God; and that in a world where hope and encouragement were all thrown into the good scale. Now, if the evil principle predominated here, where it was discountenanced by the institutions of God, and many institutions of men, and most of all by the shipwreck of present and eternal good which it brought on—much more there, where no checks exist, nor tendency in things to right themselves. It must be that seeing the good would not flourish here, where the whole atmosphere and influences of heaven wooed it, die it must there, where not one genial ray can reach it. Angels and ministers of grace come not there; salvation of Christ comes not; hope comes not; and the determination of death comes not: there are no just men to parry off mischief, or to overawe it. Every one is condemned for the

predominancy of evil in one shape or other. How can it otherwise be, then, but that the good principle will die and be forgotten, the evil principle rise in strength, and riot in the activity of the unhappy people.

Here then, I say, is hell enough out of the natural workings of such a population, without one interference of Almighty God. With what full swing power will rage and havoc! with what fell swoop the arm of revenge will bring its bloody stroke! Hosts encountering hosts in dubious battle, wounds and bloodshed and agony, and no relief of death! Knowledge will invent systems of slavery and arts of cruelty; and inventions for accomplishing the ends of wickedness, beyond aught recorded of in history, will come forth from thoughtful and malicious brains. All the cruel acts of man will be played off remorseless; inquisitionary dungeons will arise anew, and racks and torments for the body of men will ply their antient work. The ferocity of Carribs and the dark cruelty of Malays, and the tortures of American savages, and Sodom's lustfulness, and Carthaginian fraud, and Rome's tyrant grasp, will all revive. And beauty will be there to light the cruel fires of jealousy, and arm nation against nation as heretofore. And poetry will be there to compose the war-song; and ambition to league revolts; and civil warfare, with every form of mischief this earth hath groaned beneath, all embittered and exasperated manifold.

Now, tell me, brethren, could you endure such anarchy and confusion for a life long—could you endure it for ever? this carnival of every lust, and revelry of every passion. Yet what is there, who is there, to put to it a check? There is no principle of correction. Do you say, regard for their own happiness—What happiness? I ask; they have murdered happiness, and it comes not. If you return from the hot and hellish mixture to meditate apart, what have you to think of but of happiness for ever lost, of peace departed, of heaven forfeited, of misery present, of boundless eternity and hopeless fate, and a thousand remorseful, wasteful thoughts. There is no peace—no peace; and there is no refuge from oblivion. What then, but, Up and to it again in the fearful affray? It is most miserable, most pitiful to think upon.

Hitherto I have supposed things no otherwise conditioned than they are here on earth. But what, if the ground should be doubly accursed for their sakes? What, if the body should be liable to tenfold racking pains; what, if the eye should look only upon unsightly things, and the ear should lose its faculty of tasting melody—or, perceiving it, should be invaded with restless, dunning noises; what if the sun should smite with tropic fires, and suffocating winds whirl the miserable natives to and fro; what, if the realities of all that is threatened should come to pass, and the mighty devils become our masters, and we their thralls, to be used and misused as their beasts of labour; what, if God should put

forth his power, and give the wicked who set him at naught, their habitation upon some burning star or fiery comet, to live like the salamander in everlasting fire?—What, if all that Dante and Milton and Tasso have imagined in their several hells—the physical torments of the one, the mental anguish of the other, the deformed, filthy, obscene forms of the third—should concur; and the imagined picture of Belial be realized! That the wicked

> Caught in a fiery tempest shall be hurled
> Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
> Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk
> Under you boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
> There to converse with everlasting groans,
> Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
> Ages of hopeless end.

But of these things I make no handle; wishing to address myself to imagination no further than is necessary to embody the thing for the consideration of reason.

Now when reason taketh this picture under her deliberation, I know not what confusion she feels, but surely she is distressed. She thinks it pitiful that a brief, transient space of time, like life, should decide and determine these terrible conclusions of eternity. She could wish a taste of it, and then a chance of escaping from it. And, oh! it would please her well, could she indulge the fond hope of seeing all yet recovered and restored to happy seats; Hell cheated, the devil himself converted, and the universal world

bound in chains of love and blessedness. It seemeth more than terrible to think of wretches swimming and sweltering for ever in the deep abyss, preyed upon by outward mischiefs and distracted by inward griefs, tortured, tormented, maddened for evermore. There is a seeming cruelty in this quietus of torment, in this ocean of sorrow and suffering, which shocks the faculties of reason and distresses the powers of belief.

The edge of this painful conception we consider to be not a little removed by that activity, which we have given to the commonwealth of miserable creatures. They are tormented, as wicked men are at present tormented, with certain aggravation of their case, brought on chiefly by the separation of the worthy. The same elements which work their wofulness here, work their wofulness there, but with more success, from not being withstood inwardly by the better law of the mind, now for ever silent; outwardly by the active agents of goodness, now for ever translated from the sphere. Now, as we think not of blaming God for the misery and wretchedness in which the savage tribes exist in the Indian seas, nor for the degradations under which the Hindoos have groaned for rolling ages, but attribute it to the active agency of the evil parts of nature, and the passive suppression of the good parts of nature; and least of all do the degraded people themselves think of blaming him; no more do I think that they in heaven will blame, or they in hell lament, for the sufferings that are endured.

They will go on actively occupied with their fell pursuits; they will sweat on in their foul debaucheries, and wallow on in their sinks of wickedness, and they may have a glory in it. I say not but the people may make them merry with their ignominious case, and constitute honourable offices of crime, and institute royal rewards of wickedness; and, by their ambitions, heat the natural furnace of hell seven times hotter than God did make it. And while they hasten their red revelry, and gallop through the whole circuit of crime, and drink the bitterness of every passion—I see not but the people may think it glorious, and conceive that all are paltry to them, and that they are the great and mighty ones of creation. For what verily is all this self-adulation and dreaming of vanity, but another torturing demon, which exalts itself over the glorious parts of human nature, and turns them into degradation, extracting even from good qualities the most sorrowful sensations. Had Satan not been vain-glorious, he might still have stood; his vain-glory brought him to hell, and of hell was the most stinging torment, as our Poet hath well pourtrayed in the several speeches which he hath put into his mouth.

So that I think we very much take the thing for granted, when we fancy the wicked creatures pinched and scorched alive by *active* ministers of God. Their torture is the absence of the ministry of God. God comes not to their quarters, and therefore their quarters are so hot; for, where God is, there is peace and love,—and where he is

not; there is confusion and every evil work! Alas! there comes no warning prophet nor ministering priest; no reformer, nor Saviour, to their world. It floats far remote from the habitations of holiness, and no emanations of the divine Spirit shall visit it any more. They range the wastes and wildernesses of sin, and build the fabrics of iniquity, and work the works of darkness, and travel in the ways of cruelty and wickedness. The murderous devil is their master, his emanations inspire them, his powers of darkness rule them. They aye toil like Vulcan and his slaves, manufacturing thunderbolts for this their cruel Jove, to overwhelm themselves withal; and, as Etna, the fabled residence of these workers in fire, conceives in her bowels that flame and smoke which she afterwards vomits to scorch the vegetation up, which else would beautify her woody and verdant sides—so these wretched men will aye conceive within their soul malicious, fiendish imaginations and purposes, which being brought forth will destroy all the good which else might flourish in their clime. Who knows but there may be evidences, even there, of a good God,—incitements to meditation upon all the better alternatives of being,—which, by reason of abounding wickedness, are frustrated, and the people tantalized with the sight and thought of good, which their own crazed and disjointed frames did aye hinder them from realizing.

These may be imaginations only, and certainly they are unequal to the subject. But when I see

the wretchedness created within the breast of man by the simple excess or overstrained action of any power, however good; how benevolence being in excess will drive man into Quixotic madness, and make him a world's sport; how malice will drive him into misanthropic madness, and much learning will make him mad; how sensibility will make him a melancholic, helpless creature; and disappointed love make him wander under the pale moon, till he catches her lunatic influences; how the 'amor sceleratus habendi,' or 'hell-fire greed,' (if I may be permitted a Scottish version) will waste a man like a shadow, and eat the flesh off his bones though he have a royal dowry in his coffers—Oh! when I think how near every man verges upon the confines of madness and misery, and how the least shift in the fabric of our minds would send heavenly reason into howling madness—I fancy that I see a thousand powers resident in God, by the smallest expense of means, to make a hell such as no earthly science or earthly language is able to represent. Bring me all the classes of men upon the earth, and let me have the sorting and the placing of them upon this earth, and I shall make hells for each one of them without further ado. I would send the poets to bear burdens, and the porters to endite tuneful songs. The musicians I would appoint over the kennels, and the roving libertines I would station over the watch and ward of streets. I would banish the sentimentalists to the fens, and send the labourers of the fens to seek their food among

the mountains; each wily politician I would transplant into a colony of honest men, and your stupid clown I would set at the helm of state. But, lest it may be thought I sport with a subject which I strive to make plain, I shall stop short and give no further proof of this wicked ingenuity; for sure I am, I could set society into such a hot warfare and confusion, as should in one day make half the world slay themselves, or slay each other, and the other half run up and down in wild distraction.

But should these explanations not satisfy the hesitating mind, I have no other resource than to refer him to the very words of Scripture, for information upon both the nature and the duration of these hellish sufferings. In all the passages where Christ speaks of the two states of retribution, it is always with the strongest possible assurance of their eternity. His words are, 'everlasting punishment, everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;' 'into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' This last expression, the most direful of all, he repeats three times in the compass of one short discourse. The opposite condition of the righteous is described in terms equally expressive of eternal endurance. I do not remember, and have not been able to discover any one passage of scripture where it is written that the conditions of good and ill which follow judgment will have an end. On the contrary, wherever in the

writings of the apostles they are alluded to, they are spoken of as irreversible and irremediable. Nevertheless there are passages having an indirect reference to this subject, which have been thought to speak a different language, and, seizing hold of them, some Christians, with Origen at their head, have given to these words Eternity and Everlasting, a limited sense. The passages I refer to are in Paul's writings, where he speaks of the universality 'of the free gift through Jesus Christ, unto justification of life;' and, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' This latter passage receives its explanation from that which immediately follows: 'Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.' No place in the 'all who shall be made alive in Christ,' being found for those who are not his. And in very truth all are made alive in Christ. For without his subjugation of death and the grave, we are given to understand that all men would have continued subject to their dominion. So that he is the Prince of life to all, though to some a life of happiness, to others a life of sorrow. The former passage cannot be mistaken by any person who will read the fifth chapter of the Romans, in which it is found, where those who shall reign in life by Jesus Christ are only such as receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. The true interpretation of these and other passages where Christ is said to have died for all, is this, That he hath offered the gift of eternal life as a free donation to the world,

without any preference or hinderance of any one. But there would be no use or value in the donation, if it were not to deliver us from some state to which we lay exposed. If eternal life would have come of course to all, then it would have been vainglorious in Christ to have taken the merit of bringing it within our reach. But in bringing it within the reach of all, he may be said as truly to have died for all, and given life to all; as a king who gives a constitution to all his subjects, may be said to give liberty to them all; though it be well known, that free constitution contains within its bosom, bonds and imprisonment and death to those who do crimes deserving of such condemnation. So the constitution of Christ is a constitution of everlasting life and glory to all who know it, although it contain within its breast, death and damnation to those who commit crimes deserving of such a fate.

It will not bear a question, that so far as revelation is to be believed, it bears that the conditions of the righteous and wicked are irreversible. The whole structure of revelation hath it engraven upon every part. If there had been a time at which hell was to have been unpeopled, that were so important an æra as to have merited the amplest details; and yet a hint of it is not given. If the punishment of hell were meant for the reformation of the reprobate people, then certainly they would not have been committed to the devil and his angels, who are but indifferent reformers; and some insight would have been given us into the means and nature of the reformation, instead of as-

surances that the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. I understand how this world is a state of probation, because we constantly stand exposed to good and evil, with notices from God of both, with power from him to perform the one, and inclinations of nature to perform the other. But it were not a state of probation if there were a second state of probation to follow after. For probation doth not lead to probation, but to issues. It is very extraordinary that heaven is presented always upon the condition of our abiding steadfast and immoveable, if, whether we abide so or not, this heaven will come to each one of us. There must be another gospel preached in that state of purgatory, other opportunities of good afforded by these angels of the devil to whose company they are consigned, before the purification can take place upon which they feign that they shall pass into heaven. But it is not needful to enumerate the principles of the gospel to which this tenet doth offence, seeing we should have to enumerate them every one. It will be better to discover the error in which the notion originates, and endeavour to correct it, which we will do after one single remark upon the principle of interpreting scripture by which the advocates of this doctrine beguile so many followers.

They endeavour to find out parts of scripture in which the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, is used of a limited duration, of which there are many instances. But it still remains for them to prove that it is so used in the place in question; for, the proper

meaning of the word is to express the very opposite of limited time. In the former places it is used out of its ordinary meaning, because there are words in connexion with it, or circumstances of the thing it relates to, which hinder all possibility of mistake. Now on the contrary in the passages in question, there is nothing to limit, but every thing to enlarge the sense, such as reiteration 'for ever and for ever' in 'the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;' while, in the circumstances connected with it, there is every thing to strengthen the same impression, 'the fire prepared for the devil and his angels;' manifestly implying that the wicked go into the same conditions of being with the reprobate angels, of whose restitution to their former estate we have never heard. Then the fate of the wicked is expressed in the same breath and the same language as that of the righteous, which no one dreams of being for a limited time. But there is something still more vicious and unsound in this, that they should hang so very important a feature of divine government upon so slender a support. There is a proportion always observed, not only in the revelations of God, but in all the systems of human wisdom, between the importance of every truth, and the importance with which it is enunciated or pronounced. To hang a vast and weighty conclusion upon a single word, or infer it from an indirect allusion, is such indiscreet weakness, as never to be admitted in the inter-

pretation of a document of real life or practical affairs. Every writing must be interpreted according to its own strong and leading drift, not by the finesse of criticism, or by the artifices of ingenuity. Now if the Universalists (as those are called who argue for limited punishment) are to be permitted to infer so essential a conclusion from methods of interpretation so indirect and inconclusive as those exposed above; then we argue in vain with the Catholics against purgatory, image-worship, transubstantiation, the supremacy of Peter's see, the supplication and intercession of saints, and their other heretical opinions, which have each as good, I think a better colour of truth, from certain passages of Scripture, and can be borne up by reasonings equally good with those against which we hold our present argument.

But in all controversies, the most Christian way is to aim at enlightening rather than confuting your opponent; and therefore we now go on to discover what bias of mind hath led these men so to wrest the Scripture from its proper sense, as to imagine the fate of the wicked to be only for a time. And we have no hesitation to give it to the very best of feelings, a desire to save the mercy and benevolence of the Almighty, which they suppose to be wounded by the opposite doctrine. This they combine with the philosophical tenet, that all punishment is and ought to be for the reformation of the criminal; and thinking that they have both good feeling and sound philosophy to rest

upon, they have the less remorse, or rather think they do God service, in endeavouring to force his word into compliance with such wise benevolence.

In the theology of their argument they take for granted a certain notion of the mercy and goodness of God, with which everlasting punishment is inconsistent. Now the question is, whence this notion is derived by them, that they should be so confident of its truth, as for its sake to efface the plain meaning of Scripture. The mercy and goodness of God need not be lauded here, after what hath been written in the third part of this discourse. But though exceeding great, and greatly to be adored, and sufficient for the salvation of all the earth, these attributes do consist with others of a firmer texture and a sterner mood. Here are we, the sons of men, suffering daily pain, misery, and death, although we were not instrumental to the fall. God looks upon our case, and doth not hinder it. He hath sent a remedy, but by far the greater portion of men have never heard of it. Contemplate the condition of whole continents of the earth sweltering in sultry toil, or raging in fierce contests of mutual misery and destruction, oppressed by the wilfulness of single men, at whose pleasure they are bought and sold, imprisoned and put to death, without knowledge of better things to come, or cheerful hope of any redress of wrong. Ah for what? for the sin of our first great parents, over whom we had no control; let them contemplate this and see what stern attributes

dwell by the side of divine mercy and goodness. I confess, when I contemplate the administration of this woful world since the fall, so far as it is recorded in the annals of nations, I feel a shrinking terror of the sternness of Him in whose hands the government rests. The world hath been a very furnace of hot and murderous passions, a seething vessel of blood, which hath never rested, but smoked to heaven in vain. Even still, after the great propitiation and atonement for the world's sins, it never resteth. Every day men are immolated upon a bloody altar, and their unshrived spirits pass in most desperate moods into eternity. Wickedness rageth, princes combine against the Lord and his Anointed, they filch the sacred authority of God, they plant their scornful foot upon the neck of noble nations, and they defy the tears and groans of millions to melt their stony hearts. Oh, my God! when will this have an end? when wilt thou dash them in pieces like the potsherd, and vie them in thy hot displeasure? This, when I look upon and remember from what small beginnings it arose, I, for one, cannot doubt of the Almighty's force of character to carry any thing into effect. If God can exist with such a blighted region and tormented people under his government, why may he not also exist in the knowledge and permission of hell? Tragedies as deep as hell are consummating every day under his tender eye, and deeds of darkness, foul as the pit, transacted in highest places with the insignia of his holy authority. They make his name a

sounding horn through which to blow blasphemy and cruelty over the world. They make his religion a veil of midnight, to darken the eye of reason and deaden the free-born energies of man. Why, if his nature be so soft, doth he allow these most shocking sights for one instant? and, allowing them now, may he not allow them hereafter? Do these amiable enthusiasts now imagine that the Divine nature is grieved, and its enjoyment overshadowed, by the enormities into which this earth has broken loose? No! The Divine nature is a strong texture of being, which is not troubled by any such provocations. It is bound in bands of eternity and unchangeableness. It giveth law, and rejoiceth in the execution of law. It giveth one law of blessedness to righteousness, another law of misery to sin; and it is pleased and satisfied with both. For, each is equally needful to the welfare of the universe; which standeth happy, because with obedience cometh all enjoyment and delight, with disobedience all misery and tribulation to its people. They step across the dividing line, and a thousand perplexities from within, a thousand troubles from without, invade their heretofore untroubled being. And they are shipped off by no active infliction of God, but as it were by the necessity of their nature, to herd and congregate with spirits accursed. This may seem, to soft and tender-hefted nature, a blemish in the character of God, and the construction of his creatures. But seem how it may to human nature, it is no less certain, and hath been evinced in the

bevy of angels who were detruded from their seats in heaven to the bottomless pit, and too fatally evinced in all Adam's posterity denounced for one offence. I wonder that *we* should speculate, who are labouring under the fatal reality! The beings of another sphere, who retain their constancy and enjoyment, may speculate about the limitations of divine infliction, and wonder to what length God's hatred of sin may carry him against the soft intercession of his mercy and goodness, and when these two principles of his nature will come into equilibrium and find a resting place. But for us who taste and know, who feel and suffer, it is vain to urge such speculations against assurance, and to raise up tranquillizing delusions of God's nature against positive revelations of his nature.

Next to meet their philosophical notion, that all punishment is for the reformation of the offender; however good it may be in human jurisprudence, it certainly is not the principle of the divine procedure, as that is to be gathered from what we know; in evidence of which, I instance the condition of the apostate angels, who since their fall have not been visited by hope nor relaxation of woe, but are ever urged, and ever to be urged, if Scripture is to be believed, with excessive woe. They were as good spirits as any other, as well ingratiated in their Creator's favour and advanced in his confidence, and had as good and rightful a hold of his tender mercy. But there they lie in chains of darkness dreeing the everlasting penance

of sin, which, when once it enters, deranges the fine tissue of happy natures for ever;—even as we often see a stroke of terrible calamity derange for ever the organization of reason and intellect, which no solacements of friends nor softening influence of time shall afterwards restore. Sin is rightly conceived of, not by comparison with crimes against human law, that may be wiped away by a suitable forfeit, but when it is imagined to bring along with it an irremediable fall; God's provinces would not otherwise be secure, but always under calms and storms, like our habitation. Therefore, to insure the felicity of the whole, the part is sacrificed. Where sin comes, it weeds the creature out from his place, and transplants him into sinful regions, where he can have his humour gratified at its proper expense.

Man is an exception certainly to this rule of steadfast and immovable conditions proceeding from sin. But, that it is the exception which confirms the rule is most manifest, from the terrible power of an Almighty Being, which was necessary to wrench us from the grasp of our enemy back again into hope; from the steps that had to be taken in the courts above, and the exhibition that had to be made in the world beneath, before recovery was even possible. And see, with all the sacrifice and suffering, by how slow degrees recovery comes about, how few have partaken of it, and with how much chance of failure it is surrounded; what a struggle, what a trial is involved in the salvation of any

single man. Which all serves to show how hard it was to escape man back from under the curse that is engraven on all creation against sin! and how, with all the intervention of Jesus Christ, there has only, as it were, dawned on us the morning streaks of a day, which a thousand vicissitudes may overcast and utterly deface; it is but a star of hope that hath peered through the sorrowful gloom, unto which, if we take steadfast heed, the day will dawn, and the day-star arise upon our hearts—but if not, then double darkness and tenfold dismay will cover us for evermore!

The true character of Sin, therefore, I hold, both by the example of the reprobate angels and the history of man's redemption, is, that it brings with it irremediable conclusions. The Saviour's powerful arm hath as it were made a little clear space around us for holy action, and opened a bore in the cloudy heavens through which the light of restoration may come in upon the hopeless earth. And this illuminated spot shifts about and about upon the face of the earth, and a thousand angels of darkness are aye endeavouring to scarf up the bright sign of mercy in the heavens. Oh! they grudge us so much won from their rightful dominion over a sinful place; and it is a fearful struggle which the power of the Spirit of God hath to maintain against them. They come on, howling for their own like wolves that have been scared from their prey. When the dawn visits another region, they raise commotions to shut it out. Thrones they rally under their black banners; and

principalities under their ensign of darkness; false religion makes them drunk with the cup of her abominations, and they rush full upon the servants of the Lord like incarnate demons from the pit. Sin is the lord of this earth, and grudgeth hard to give up what he won in the fatal garden.

To confirm all these remarks upon the nature of Sin, I request your attention again to the history of the fall, which will show the truth of what is said above,—that sinning against God is not like an offence against human laws, punishable in proportion to the degree of offence; but involves a total loss of the happy form of being, an everlasting change, unless some speciality in the case should allow of a specialty in the treatment, and an abrogation for a while and in part of the fatal irreversible sentence. For I hold that our dispensation of mercy is but a keeping off for a space of the fatal issues, and the clearing of a little ground on which we may enter the lists, and have a bout with the enemy for our deliverance. Who it was that procured us such a chance for our life we all know; why the Saviour took for us such affection, and encountered for us such hazard, we know not, except it were that we were involved with Adam, without having a stand for ourselves; but however this may be, much illustration of the question in hand will be derived from looking back at the history of the fall.

When we look upon this earth as now we see it, drenched with the gore of its children, and overcast with the clouds of darkness, it is hardly

possible to imagine what it was at its birth—But we know from Scripture, that God pronounced every part of it very good. It was another variety of the constitution of heaven, of other elements composed, and by other laws ordained, but in nothing untoward or unhappy. It came forth of God's most blessed word, and touched with the cordial of happy life, every sense of every sensitive thing. When finished, it stood a goodly expression of its maker's good-will. Sorrow was not indigenous to our planet, nor did this eclipse of the Divinity frown upon her birth; her birth-star was the light of her Maker's countenance; her birth-song was the music of the starred spheres; her birthright was a womb teeming with wholesome fruits, and the ornaments of her birth was a face clothed with beauty, and blushing with virtue, happiness, and peace. Into this stately palace, created and furnished for his reception, man was introduced to rule over it and enjoy it. Every creature was brought to him in sign of homage, that he might bestow upon it a name by which it should know to hear and obey his voice. The whole platform of his being was erected for happiness ever to endure. While there was no sin, there was no sorrow of any kind; he enjoyed with God a close communion, and the angels of God ministered to his enjoyment—his whole soul was pure and untroubled. But, as it is not possible for any creature formed by the hand of God to exist without a law, and an obligation to his Maker, the first man had also an ordinance given

to him. He was placed in the midst of a garden teeming with every wholesome fruit and joyful fragrance, of all which it was freely given him to eat; one only tree was withheld from his taste, upon the refraining from which his trial turned. What might be the reason for this form of trial we know not, and cannot stay to inquire. It may seem to our minds a silly matter to deprive him of this, when bestowing upon him so much. But it serves to show that the nature of a sinful act lies not in the magnitude or enormity of the thing done against the word of God, but in casting away the fear of God, and forgetting our obligations to him so far, as even to admit the thought of acting for our own interest, or any interest adverse to Him in whom we live and move and have our being. The evil lies not in the magnitude but in the nature of the thing; in being off our guard when we should be guarded round by a whole host of affections and obligations. The banishing of these from our side is the front of the offence. Nay more, Adam, being surrounded so on every side with memorials of his Maker's goodness, and saluted ever and anon with the welcome of his Maker's voice, tasting and enjoying at every sense, was the more guilty that the thing was small from which he was hindered. The balance of restraint was the less against the weight of his possession, the inducement to disobey was the weaker, and the argument to obey the stronger—but this by the way.

What I request your attention to more espe-

cially in the illustration of this argument, is the diversity of this constitution of Paradise from any constitution of human laws. There is no code limiting liberty on every side; there is no scale of crimes passing each other in the deepness of their die, nor corresponding scale of punishments rising the one above the other in severity of infliction. One simple action decides the question of sinfulness or innocence; and upon that action, though to us it seems of slight offence, the whole condition of the creature turns. There is no proportion between crime and punishment. There is a line and limitation, which being once crossed, however slightly, brings as it were by magic an entire transformation of nature, and transmutation of condition.

Now, having remarked the constitution, remark next, in the event, the nature of the judgment, and of the issues, for it casts the greatest light upon the whole subject of this argument. He transgressed; instantly all former things departed from him like the shadow of a dream, and new things took possession of him as when that dream is broken. Instead of his virgin purity, came thoughts of shame, which are the offspring of a lustful heart; instead of his open-faced honesty came concealment; instead of avowal came apology; his love of God changed into fear and cunning; his love of his wife changed into chiding. And not only did his own nature lose its virgin hues, and take on the tints of every crime which hath been perpetrated by his unhappy children,

but every thing on which he looked, which he touched or handled, fled from its condition, and sunk along with him, as if all nature had shifted and removed away from its place and endowment. The earth forgot her voluntary fruitfulness, and bristled with noisome prickly weeds; the plants forgot their wholesomeness; the creatures their peacefulness; mankind their blessedness; that very instant the world became the scene of that solitary transgression. And it is irremediable. Kind transmits its kind, age succeedeth age, but no solitary creature can get within the antient conditions of its nature. It rolls on a deluge of iniquity, which no power prevaileth to stem. Cities need to be consumed with fire from heaven; nations to be rooted out; and the whole earth to be washed with the waters of vengeance. But, true to the curse, it sprouts and procreates new generations, possessed of the same corrupt and degenerated nature. This then is the conclusion of the whole matter, that sin against God is not like a human offence, to be atoned for by a certain measure of punishment, and so wiped away, but that it is a great crisis in the existence of every creature, whereon its destiny turns for ever.

These are subjects a good deal beyond our span, and therefore the best way is to learn modestly from the revelation of God. This we have endeavoured to do from the only instances upon record, the reprobate angels and fallen man; and the conclusion is, that sin maketh all former things

to cease. The intrinsical glory of the creature is dismantled, the neighbourhood of God is changed into cold exile and alienation. For we hear no more of the Lord God walking in the midst of their habitations, to hold converse with the sons of men. He could not live with any one who had defiled himself. The good God could not brook the neighbourhood of his goodly handy work, so soon as it had sinned. From these instances, the only two upon record, I not only deduce the veritable effect of sin to imprint a lasting stain, but I might also raise an argument against the amiable enthusiasts, with whom I have at present to do, upon the question of the excessive disproportion which they say there is between everlasting misery and a limited lifetime of sinfulness. Although I deny this method of proceeding by proportion to be consonant with the facts of divine punition of sin, yet for the sake of their prejudice upon this head, I will raise an argument of the proportion of future punishment with present sinfulness, on the scale of this only instance of punishment executed against an evil work which we have upon record.

Let us then go cooly to estimate. Here did one transgression 'bring death into this world with all our woe;' all sufferings that have been, that are, and that are to be, are from the womb of this big sentence. All diseases, sicknesses, sorrows and death, with all unseen, unknown effects of death, are the tribute which mankind have paid for that one com-

mission. All waste and revolution and convulsions, whether of the labouring elements or of troubled life, were bred when Adam fell, and have continued to propagate their kind. War, fire and pestilence; hunger, thirst and nakedness; pain, horror and anguish, the woful stings within the breast; and the whips of fortune, which ever overlay the content and peace of man, did issue out of hell and reign on earth when innocence forsook our abode. And they continue to have the dominion over us, notwithstanding of the great atonement. Yea, though the Son of God stripped himself to our aid, and finished a work of redemption, still the enemies of the earth make that strong and terrible head which we see in every land, and which every one feeleth within the bounds of his own experience. Against all the aids and graces of the Spirit of God shed without measure, behold the enormous accumulation of grief with which we are weighed down. Reason, then, if one transgression was followed by such abalienation of man and man's habitation, and man's innumerable posterity, insomuch that had not a remedy cast up, and a corrective been introduced, there is no saying at what stage of misery we might have stopped, and whether there might have been any need to translate the wretched people to any sorer habitation;—Reason, I say, if thus they fell from friend-like converse and communion with the highest, to such a pitch that the earth needed to be eased of them, and washed clean for a new experiment;

if, by fault of one transgression they fell, till out of their devoted myriads there could be found only one family in all, and out of their devoted cities only one family in all, which was not worthy of instant cutting off.—What, what must come to pass, when each one of us, covered with more sins than there are hairs upon his head, and pregnant with as many iniquities as his bosom hath conceived thoughts, shall come up for judgment into the presence of that Holy God, who could not brook the neighbourhood of his goodly handy work when once, but once, it had contravened his Holy Law! Can you, with this only instance of execution against evil before your eyes, doubt as improbable, deny as incredible, or deride as impossible, the issues of hell, which are threatened upon those who hold out against proffered mercy, spurning the name of Jesus from the honourable places of their heart, defying the power, and refusing the intercession of heaven?

Think of the difference of the two cases, and say, if the difference of the two issues be so disproportionate? There was in the former nothing to be gained. In the latter, heaven is to be gained and hell avoided. There was in the former no taste of sin's miserable fruits; in the latter, there is one constant experience of their bitterness; in the former case the mind was deliberative only for a brief moment, it decided wrong, and all instantaneously vanished. In the latter, the mind is deliberative a whole lifetime, it

decides wrong, vengeance tarries; it decides wrong again, still vengeance sleeps: so mercifully are we dealt with through the whole period of human life. Adam was a perfect man, it is true; but then in his case nothing but continued perfection would do. His posterity are less perfect men; but less, far less than perfection by the grace of God will do.

Thus by every method we would apprehend this revelation of changeless conditions, which these amiable enthusiasts sacrifice before a beautiful fiction they have imagined of the goodness and mercy of God; as if that attribute was not compatible with the existence in the universe of sorrowful and suffering creatures. But they understand not what they dote upon, neither consider the condition of all created things, which are not like the eternal Jehovah, obnoxious to no change and infallible, but have a limitation of being, and exist within bounded habitations, which it is always possible for them to overpass. They are kept in loyal fealty by the happiness and joy that toucheth all their nature, and exciteth in it sweet emotion; by the sunshine of God's pleasant countenance in which they bask, they are enamoured of all good thoughts and obedient offices. But upon the other hand, 'to make assurance doubly sure,' they are kept from disobedience by the knowledge of the woe which sin worketh upon their whole estate, and by the exhibition within the limits of creation of that woe and wickedness which it hath actually

wrought. Take that exhibition away, let sin cease to engender sorrow, let the outcast return back to his heritage after a season of forfeiture, and you do at once leave the stability of happy creatures unsupported upon the one side, you fall foul of the most antient constitution in creation, and take the key-stone from the arch of the happy universe.

It is easy and pleasant for us to sacrifice every thing for the stake which we have in the issue; so pleasant and easy would it be for the criminal at the bar, that inquisition and sentence should flee before the face of mercy; and it would be very good-natured in the Judge to grant the prayer of his request. But what comes of honest and upright men thereby? Where is their safety, if thus justice is to be bartered away to womanish weakness, or to the cry of entreating nature? There would ascend from every prison a cry of lamentation and mercy, and the prison doors would be opened to vomit forth upon the works of peaceful men, a herd of depredators to grub up the fruits of their labours like the locusts of the East, and despoil their happiness like an army of red-handed savages. Can God hang the universe upon his nod with less stability of purpose than is needful for the government of a petty state? It is impossible. It is fine, very fine, for men to reason of mercy, and draw after them a train of good-natured thoughtless people, and take credit over those who stand up for the awful sovereignty of right, and the terrible punishment of wrong.

But what mean they by such paltry cozenage of the people? Do they not see how they open the sluices of evil nature, and give inlet to a sweeping deluge of iniquity? They demolish divine law, they render Christ's sacrifice vain, they spoil him of his power over the heart, and give every demon of darkness a holyday to rejoice and be active. They know not the nature of man; how with hope in the distance he can endure any tribulation, and pass through it unmoved. Who cares for hell, when heaven is to bring out the conclusion of it with a shout of gratulation? Who cares for righteousness, when wickedness will succeed in the end as well? Who cares for God, when in despite of God we shall win our own again?

What may be in the womb of eternity, I know not. Whether there may be a visit paid to hell's habitations by another 'mighty to save,' I know not. Whether there may be some other dispensations of mercy to the abject creatures when this dispensation is fulfilled, another trial of the forlorn creatures, and another levy of righteous men carried after probation and sanctification to heaven; and so, dispensation after dispensation, the numbers of the damned thinned and thinned until at length they shall be all recovered—these things there is not one shadow of revelation to induce the hope of, and therefore I declare it to be the most daring invasion upon the prerogative of God, the most monstrous abuse of his gracious revelation, and the most dangerous unloosing of its power over men, to set forth as

certain, as probable, or even as possible, such doctrines as are wont to be set forth amongst us.

It seems a cruel-hearted thing thus to argue against an opinion which hath in it such a show of tender mercy, and consign to eternal abodes of darkness and dismay the souls and bodies of my fellow men; but I am convinced that it is the greatest mercy upon the whole thus to state the plain unvarnished truth. For such are the pleasures of sin for a season, that while we can look hell in the face we will continue to follow after them, and so defeat all the good ends of present enjoyment and future blessedness, which God aimeth by revelation to bring about. Now, this opinion doth just make hell such a thing as human nature can tolerate, and so panders to every evil tendency of our nature which this awful issue was intended to refrain. A vague indefinitude settles down upon the mind, little better than positive disbelief. It is content to run the risk, not perceiving its magnitude; it exaggerates the mercy of God in the proportion of its own need of mercy; it seems to do him the more honour the more it magnifies this lovely attribute; it shudders at every one as a monster who can imagine God to be of a sterner, firmer mood; and by dwelling upon this topic constantly, sin drops its heinousness, the law looses its strength, the future is disburdened of its fear, and life goes on just the same as if God had overlaid it with no rule, and required of us no account. The whole constitution is defeated, and

all the ends of divine government are made null and void. Now what good, what beauty, what mercy is there, in thus defeating all God's intentions for the renovation of mankind, and bringing us back into the same pass from which he hath sent his Son to recover us?

I allow that if God had actually consigned some portion of men to these awful abodes, brought them into being, bred them up in wicked training, that he might ship them off like Africans to work his pleasure in the infernal pit; I should have stood amazed and horror-struck no less than they; and cried, Let such a tenet be hunted from the face of the earth, back again into the detestable brain which bred it. But, seeing *all* men intreated to shun this direful abyss, and Jesus sent from heaven to redeem *all* from its curse, and open up *to all* the gate which leadeth unto honour and life, I marvel greatly how any man can be so thoughtless as to defeat the progress of this salvation by undervaluing the misery from which it is to save us. It is to unpeople heaven and to people hell, to forge such notions. For it musters the resolutions of men to meet the issue. Whereas, Christ would utterly defeat that resolution, would make nature shrink with horror from the foul and fearful catastrophe, that she may turn round as in desperation and call on God for mercy. I declare it is to blunt conscience, and make the shafts of conviction harmless, and leave men at will to reject the Gospel. Nay, truly, the avenue of sin must be shut by the

horrid shapes of fear and shrieks of horror which are heard onward, a little onward from the place we now occupy. But if instead we heard the voice of hope and expectation, the bold purpose of endurance, and the cheerful call to a little patience, when all should be well; if we saw them mounting to heaven on joyful wing from the surface of the sulphurous lake, an active intercourse passing across the gulf; then what were it but a bold adventure like that which voyagers make to inhospitable climes, a threading of difficult sounds and dangerous straits, for the glory which awaits us when our labour is complete—an adventure which it were accounted poverty of character to fear, resolution to undertake, and heroism to have braved!

These speculators know not that human nature which they study to please. They please it at the expense of all that is great and noble. They make hell tolerable at the expense of making heaven indifferent. And by consequence, none of the powers of heaven come down to possess the soul. There is no regeneration of the inner man, or recovery of the divine image. The world continues in its pitiful flight, for want of heaven-born characters to do deeds which breathe of heaven. If we can make the ends of God's amplified mercy and our own diminished character to meet, we are content. As the one decreases, imagination extends the other. And so we pass into dwarfishness in respect of good, and into enormity in respect of evil.

But as I said, it is heaven the Saviour preaches, not hell! Hell is not the alternative to be chosen, and therefore it is made horrible beyond all choice. Hell is the fire from which the divine mercy would pluck us. And it is conceived in every odious and shocking guise, to horrify human feelings as much as material fire and sulphureous smoke and darkness horrify the real sense of man. It is described so as to make the mind suffer from the thought, as much as the body suffers from the most horrid torments. But why? because it is the truth, and that we might know the truth, and take hold of the hand that is stretched out to save us. If ever hell were described in Scripture, as oft it is in an enthusiast's sermon, out of a fell delight in cleaving the general ear with horrid speech; if ever it was made like a torturing tool in the hands of angry priests, to torture the souls of those whose party or faction they hate, then let it be condemned and heard of no more; but if with sympathy and pity it be spoken as the sad decree gone forth against sin; and if forthwith, when it hath taken hold of the soul, recovery and restoration be preached, and a way to avoid its terrors and surmount its fears, and ascend to the bosom of God; then, I say, let it be discoursed of while there is one single creature upon earth who dotes and dreams upon its confines without any fear of its smothering and consuming effects upon the happiness and well-being of his soul.

An innocent child not many weeks old will in its ignorance grasp the flame of a taper in its tender hand, and bring excruciating agony upon its little frame. But by that experiment it is taught the power of fire, and saved from rushing into the midst of the flames, and losing its precious life. Such little children we are. So accustomed to sin, sorrow hath become so indigenous to our nature, we are as it were so annealed to suffering; or rather this state is so dubious between good and ill, mercy and justice mingling so confusedly, pleasure and pain so wildly, God is so long-suffering, and the Gospel so gracious, that we cannot fancy a place whence mercy is clean gone for ever; we cannot fancy pure unadulterated evil, pure unmitigated sorrow, absent hope, absent consolation, absolute misery and flat despair. We are to the future world of woe what newborn children are to the present world of existence, totally unacquainted with its objects and with the strange feelings which these objects will excite. What could God do, but give us a foretaste, so far as language of the earth can dress out, and so far as conception can taste, of the savour of bad things to come. This smaller experiment he makes upon us like the smaller experiment which the child makes with the flame of the taper, in order to save us from the more fatal consequence which shall come, when we plunge soul and body, and are bathed through every pore with the overwhelming sensations of its agony.

And is God to be blamed for being so copious of his revelations to men, the more to excite them on every side to a glorious ascension up on high? Say, that he had kept this side of the picture under the vail; set forth heaven, but avoided all mention of hell—then he would have deprived his dispensation of half its power. It would have continued to have a purchase upon our hopes, but it would have lost all purchase upon our fears. Now it is the opinion of the best philosophers, that the activity of man is more prompted by the sense of present inconvenience and the fear of portending evils, than by the taste of present pleasures and the sense of future advantage. And not only would you have lost all power over this side of man, but you would have lost half the meaning and purpose of the dispensation. What means this law, if the disobedience of it draws on no consequences? What difference between those who keep it and those who keep it not? for there is none revealed. What means this dispensation of the wrath of God against his inoffensive Son? Why thus restrain our natural inclinations? Why vex us with constant calls to repentance? What better of this ascetic life? Why not live as we list? Who could have answered these questions, if it had not been revealed that these rebellious courses led down into the second death, which is aye endured but never ended! This revelation of hell is therefore the vantage ground on which the genius of the Gospel stands, and from which she points aloft to heaven.

Therefore it is not true to Scripture, it is baneful to human improvement in the long run, it is not manly withal, thus to shrink from knowing the worst; and it is very wicked to make the worst palatable. Let it stand as the Scripture hath stated it, I ask no more, but be not ye poisoned by a philosophy, falsely so called. Palliate not the worst, but avoid it, I pray you; flee from it; take to righteousness, and aim at heaven. This is your resource; and when this resource is closed against you, then is your season to complain. But at present, when all paradise unfolds its bosom to embrace us within its happy bowers, for us to be debating whether hell is tolerable, and whether we had not better run our chance awhile in its sulphurous pit, doth indicate a downward bent of nature not to be endured, much less pandered to. If any man, though hell endured but a lifetime, were in a mood to take his cast therein, rather than at once enter into the company of God and the unfallen, he is a grovelling, lustful creature, whom heaven would not be polluted with for an instant.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART VIII.

THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE CONDEMNATION AND WRATH TO COME.

From these awful scenes which we have been faintly sketching out, for in their fulness of joy or fulness of sorrow it is not given to man either to know or to describe them, we return to visible things; and, planting ourselves upon the populous earth, we could wish to lift up a voice like the last trumpet in the ears of men: How are you to escape this condemnation and wrath to come? But, alas! there is no voice like the last trumpet, to reach the ear of perishing men; and unless the Lord hasten to pour his Spirit upon all flesh, the abject people will die ignorant of salvation, and for ever perish from the way of everlasting peace. Do Thou, who gavest thy Son for sinful men, now quicken my thoughts, that they may come forth full of divine life, to plant their likeness in every bosom to which these pages may come! This, truly, is my prayer. But were my God pleased to grant me this, how little doth it avail among the myriads in this world!—among the myriads in this empire—among the myriads even in this city, who are perishing under the

mortal disease of sinfulness, that hath spread into the heart of every cottage, and is fast hauling its unvisited and unpitied inmates to habitations of misery. There is an establishment of physicians to make known the remedy unto the people, and there are houses open where the remedy is made known. But, alas! the people know not of the soul-consuming malady, and having none to tell them, they come not to be cured; while in their darkness Satan revelleth, wasting them with lust, pride and quarrel. The miserable people have no chance of being delivered, unless the Lord will awaken his congregation, and send them forth on errands of salvation. Oh, for the spirit of a Paul, to lead the congregation forth upon this errantry of good! Oh, for the spirit of a Loyola, to bind them in a harmony of exertion; Oh, for the spirit of a Luther, to make them fearless of infringing established things:—that a reformation might come about, which would not need to be reformed! But, I think Religion hath learned to make men tame and cowardly, whom antiently she made undaunted. The men of God hardly speak above their breath, who were wont to ring doom and woe into every impeding minister of evil. They creep about under the colossal limbs of power, and cry mercy instead of denouncing vengeance. It is an age in which the antient spirit is well nigh extinct; but it will revive again in this land, which hath been famous for the junction of manhood with religion; when to the piety and the humility of the church, will

be added her antient fearlessness and heroism and activity. And the offence of the offending will be feared no longer; Christian spirit will resume its boldness, Christian sight its watchfulness; every priest will be a watchman in Zion, and every Christian a soldier around its walls.

It dispirits me while I undertake to write, to think how much better these subjects have been written before, and how darkness triumphs over all the light which hath been scattered abroad. No sooner doth a book with any nerve appear, which might make invasion upon Satan's reign, than he covers it with the disparagement of some hated name, calling it enthusiastical, gloomy, or ascetic, and so keeps it from coming into those places where the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, have their strongest holds. Or he raiseth up some strong-minded, light-witted scoffer, to argue or laugh it down, whereof he hath establishments—scholars, wits, and critics—who hate the very visage of a genuine disciple of Christ, and are aye ready to asperse any book which is marked with the sign of the Cross, and send it into the arcana of oblivion. And, oh! the natural man loveth any thing better than to hear of his new birth and regeneration, and will take up with a pleasant song or idle tale sooner than he will with the institutes of his own salvation. And, alas! there are multitudes who cannot read what is written, and come not to hear what may be spoken; so that it dispirits me while I write, to think of the difficulties

which stand before my way, and how abler men have endeavoured in vain to beat these difficulties down.

But while the Press is free (which may it for ever remain!) it will send forth its host of intellectual messengers, as evening sendeth forth her constellations to rule over the darkness of the night. And as astrology believeth of the stars which come forth at even-tide, these messengers of intellectual light do, without a fable, shed various influence over the lives and fortunes of man—some, like the martial planet, stirring him to strife; some melting him to tender love, some rousing him to gay and jovial moods, and some foredooming him to the saturnine fates of melancholy and misfortune. Likewise, as in the starry firmament there is but one blessed light which hath in it any steady guidance to the lost wanderer or the sea-faring voyager, so amongst those various lights in the firmament of mind, there is but the solitary light of religion which hath in it any consolation or direction to guide the soul of man as it fareth through the perilous gulf of death onward to eternity. Therefore from the Press there should at all times issue forth, amidst its teeming company, some forms of religious truth, to guide the course of those who are ever influenced by its novelties. On which account, though we should say nothing that has not been better said before, we will, out of regard to the constant appetite of the age for novelty, and out of pure love to the good old cause, set forth our opinion.

I fancy, that if the Spirit of God were to choose out twelve men from the house of God, with whom to finish the great work of converting men, especially the men of this country, and for that purpose were, as on a second Pentecost, to bestow upon them special gifts, the gift of writing powerfully would be a chief one. For the press hath come to master the pulpit in its power; and to be able to write powerful books, seems to me a greater accomplishment of a soldier of Christ, than to be able to preach powerful discourses. The one is a dart, which, though well-directed, may fly wide of the mark, and having once spent its strength is useless for ever;—the other is the antient catapulta, which will discharge you a thousand darts at once in a thousand different directions; and it hath an apparatus for making more darts, so that it can continue to discharge them for ever. To use this most powerful of intellectual and moral instruments in the service of Christ is a noble ambition, which should possess the soul of every Christian. He doth in a manner multiply his soul thereby, and give to his ideal thoughts a habitation and a name; his ethereal spirit he doth in a way condense and present for the use of others, as they do the invisible steam of liquors; he doth rectify it, he doth make of it an *aqua-vitæ*, an elixir of life, to the refreshing and saving of many souls. Therefore I do not hesitate to confess, that in this essay in the cause of Christ upon the field of religious literature, I feel like the knight that breaks his first lance in the cause of

honour; and though I love not the fashion of modern books, conceiving them to be timid, cramped, and uncheerful, with little of the freedom and mellowness of the olden time, still for the sake of Him whom I heartily serve, I will venture at every risk, though in an unwonted costume of language, and a very ungainly style of sentiment.

To go on, therefore, with my purpose of serving my Saviour by a printed book, I call the attention of men to the way in which they hope to pass the solemn tribunal, and escape the wrath to come. Various are the shifts to which the mind hath recourse in its *hopes*. But all hope is at an end when faith cometh into action, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Now the object of faith is revelation, which revelation, upon the subject of Judgment, we have laid down at length in the preceding pages. From which if any one now fleeth, to sail away into unrevealed and unknown regions of hope, then he is a dreamer whom it is idle to argue with. For revelation is a law to hope, as it is to fear, and fixeth bounds beyond which they cannot pass; and he who believeth revelation is brought under the power of its truths by faith, just as he who beholds the outward world is brought under the power of its realities by sense. So that it were just as absurd for a man who sees a river before him, to hope it may be dry land, and so plunge into it and be drowned, as it is for a man who sees wrath

written in revelation against his way of life, to hope it may not be wrath but forgiveness, and so rush upon the bosses of the Almighty's buckler as the wild horse rusheth into the battle. Revelation is the truth of things unknown, and hath to the future the same relation which experience hath to the past; and it were as absurd to believe that what hath happened to us in life has not been so, or to hope it has not been so, (if that form of expression may be allowed,) as it is to hope that what God hath revealed against characters of our stamp will not happen. We are wont to repose all in the largeness of God's mercy; but revelation is a rule to the infinitude of the Almighty's attributes, any one of which is a sea to swallow speculation up, were it not for the shores which the Almighty hath himself set to them in the word of his truth. So that it is as absurd to hope that his justice will give way when it comes to the push before his mercy, and leave us in safety, though doomed by justice to destruction, as it would be to believe that his justice will strengthen itself and sweep all before it, devouring even those who trusted in Christ, and attached themselves to his cause. Revelation is a stiff and rigid thing, like stubborn fact, and will not be disputed: we may fancy and feign, we may quibble and dogmatize, but if we believe, that belief plants a death-blow in our imaginings, and demolisheth the strong holds of our sophistry. If revelation have propounded an

escape, there is one; if it have not propounded an escape from judgment and wrath, why then escape there is none.

There is only one position, that the revelation is not true, is a fable, is a lie, which will deliver men of an unchristian character from an unchristian destiny. Those who hold that position may hope for forgiveness, and trust in mercy to what extent they please, for they are sailing in a sea of darkness. The Deist may construct a god after his own wishes, to quiet his fears or indulge his passion or license his affections; to palliate adultery, murder, every vice and crime, as the antient heathens did; and may run the chance of that idol of imagination holding good in the end. But for a Believer in revealed truth to do the same, is first to give his belief the lie, and then to lanch into the same sea of trust which the Deist doth. These Deists are always shedding sneers upon the Christian, because he believes. The Christian doth believe what he hath upon good evidence adopted. But what doth the Deist do? He believes that, for which he hath no evidence at all; he takes God upon the credit of his own crude fancy; he rests his faith upon an invention of his brain, an invention framed out of a thousand incoherent thoughts suggested by limited and erroneous knowledge, and distorted by a thousand likings and dislikings, in no two minds alike. This creature, more deformed than sin, and more changeable than Proteus, the credulous Deist believes to be the living and true God. And if the man will be mad

and act upon his dreams, he can take the folly and the shame that will come of such fatuity. But for the Christian to do so, who believes in the God of revelation, is the highest pitch of crime added to an equal amount of folly, and is not once to be endured. Hath not God first written himself upon tables of stone, then upon the countenance of his everlasting Son, then given varieties of the same in the renewed lives of his saints? This believing, we would erase all, and write him with the imagination of the natural mind, which knoweth of him nothing at all! Which is to dash the tables of stone in pieces, to trample under foot the divinity of Christ, to give the lie to all his disciples who have evidenced him since, to give the lie to our own avowed belief, and do a thousand other inconsistent and wicked things which it is tedious to mention.

Therefore, dismissing speculation upon a subject on which God hath written unchangeable oracles, and directing the flight of hope with the hand of faith, we again come to the question, How are men to escape Judgment and the wrath to come? The frightful consequences which would ensue if God were to relent or relax the letter of his threatenings, not to this earth alone, but through all the orders of creatures, whose very being dependeth upon the faithful word of his mouth, have been exhibited in various parts of this discourse. It is impossible, it were a lie, that God should prescribe a constitution like that we have pourtrayed, and, to bring us up to its per-

formance as far as we can be brought up, devise the inventions of the Gospel, and place us under the powers of the world to come, only after all to disannul it through feebleness of execution, and suffer such to escape, as had neither listened to his voice, nor revered his statutes, nor minded any of his counsels. It is impossible, it were a lie, that God should delineate a form of acquittal, and a form of condemnation so exactly adjusted to the constitution which he had given, and, having promulgated the same to men, should in the end defeat his revealed purpose through flexibility of nature, and listen at the bar to those who listened not to him their life long, and addressed him not, save in words of execration or contempt. It is impossible, it were a lie, that God should open up and amply unfold a paradise of life into which nothing enters that defileth or maketh a lie, where is no disturbance of evil nor sorrowful fruit of sin; that he should also open up and amply unfold a furnace of hell, into which evil and sin, and death and the grave, and unregenerate sinners, and the devil and his angels were to be thrown, a hellish mixture, to work their horrid revelry unpitied, unbefriended, unreprieved for ever; and when it came to the crisis of decision, should shrink and misgive, and, unequal to the execution, leave men unparted, to work together good and evil, happiness and misery, hope and fear, as now they do. It is vanity of vanities to think so, a wicked pastime of the brain, a will of Satan's to rock souls into security. It were to make God

an egregious liar, a cruel tormentor, who scared men's lives with fears, or buoyed up their souls with expectations which from the first he knew himself unable to fulfil.

Therefore I hold no further parley with these dreams of idle brains; but return to the question, How are men to escape the condemnation and wrath to come? Seeing the whole bent of God's revelation is to work holiness in the hearts and lives of men, for which end his Son died to cleanse the conscience from the guilt of sin, and his Spirit was spread abroad to aid and abet the sanctification of men; seeing also, that the form of process at the Judgment is nothing but an inquisition into the godliness of life and Christian affection which each several soul hath come to;—it is manifest that there is no deliverance from condemnation and wrath to come, save by turning with all our hearts to the acquisition of those fruits of holiness which are to be taken under review. The question is, By what means shall we purify our hearts, and overcome the ungodly customs of the world? which having discovered, the same are the means by which we shall pass the judgment seat of God, and escape the tribulation of hell.

There is an assurance of acquittal at the day of Judgment, which it is possible to have before we depart out of the present life; for it is written in the Scriptures, that 'there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' There is a

deliverance from this body of sin and death, which is to be had before death does his work of dissolution; for it is written in the same place, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' There is a death and crucifixion of the fleshly or natural man, which takes place upon the genuine servant of Christ, and which being past, delivers him from all fear of eternal and spiritual death; as St. Paul writes, 'I am dead to the law, I am crucified with Christ.' And there ensues a new life, accompanied with the assurance of its being everlasting, as St. Paul in the same place writes, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

These passages introduce to us one of the great mysteries of our faith; which it is necessary to draw forth into a more intelligible form, for the sake of this age, which is much more intellectual than that of the Apostles. There are amongst men various kinds of natural life, of which the chief are these three, sensual life, moral life, and intellectual life, of which no one hath any virtue or continuance beyond the grave. And there is a fourth, spiritual life, which before the fall was man's chief distinction and delight, but now, through the power of sin, hath been stifled, and had continued so for ever but for the revelation of the word and Spirit of Christ. When it is begotten in the soul, it is called a new birth; and

when it magnifies and exalts itself over the head of the other three, the old man is said to be crucified with Christ, and the new man to be created in righteousness and true holiness. We are said to be already risen with Christ, and to be beyond the power of corruption and condemnation. On these four kinds of life I shall now set forth my thoughts, and discover unto men the means which God hath appointed for engendering the new and everlasting life within the soul.

Of sensual life, it is not necessary to speak at length, seeing it is so familiar to every man, having been at some time or other the very darling of his heart. It consists in the delight which the body has with all the sensual objects of the earth, the delights of touch and fleshly intercourse, the gratification of bodily appetite, the relish of various tastes, the odours of smell, the melodies of sound, and the glorious objects of vision. This life of flesh, and cultivation of the bodily affections, I regard as the lowest of all things to which human nature can be addicted. It is the animal existence. The brutes have it in common with men, though not in such variety. Its tendency is to destroy all moral and rational life, and spiritual life cannot breathe in its polluted sphere. Such men, of whom many are to be found in this age, are of the true seed of the Epicureans, and interpret the fable of Circe's cup, which transformed men into obscene bestial forms; and if any one so given up and changed out of his manly form would know his degradation, or the heights of virtue

whence he is fallen, he may see it represented in that most classical of all modern poems, the 'Comus' of Milton, or in the 'Castle of Indolence' of Thomson, which aims at the same noble end, though with unequal steps. But if they would be raised from the bed of such defiled embraces and vile enchantments, they must listen to the great disenchanter, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom if a man believe he shall never die.

Oh! it afflicts me to see this generation, to whom I write, merging apace into this inglorious life. It hath its head-quarters in your splendid feasts and your Park parades, in your Vauxhall, your Operas, and your Theatres. It is very hateful as it is exhibited in cities, where it is stewed up in hot quarters, and revels away the hours of quiet night, and wastes upon feverish couches the hours of cheerful day. In the country it shows itself under fairer forms, wandering from stream to stream, climbing the brow of lofty mountains, seeking love in cottages, and doating over the face and charms of transient nature. Ah! in this shape it is a dangerous enchantment, for it takes the form of taste and poetry, and even affects the feeling of devotion; but unless conjoined with that spiritual life whereof I am to discover the sources, it is vanity and vexation of spirit, and hurries one through an exhausting variety to the lethargy and tedium of overwrought excitement. This is the form of sensual life, which is prevailing at this day among our lettered and reading people. It hath been pro-

moted and brought into maturity by the writings of Byron and of Moore, who are high-priests of the senses, and ministers of the Cyprian goddess, whose temple they have decorated with emblems of genius, and disguised with forms of virtue, and surrounded with scenes of balmy freshness; but with all its forms and decorations it is the temple of immoral pleasure, and the service of its inward shrine is disgusting immorality. It is very pitiful to behold the hopes of a nation, the young men and young women who are to bear up the antient honours of this godly and virtuous island, hearkening to the deceptions of such enchanters, who being themselves beguiled, would fain bewitch the intellectual and moral and spiritual being of others.

Now, with regard to this sensual life whereof I treat, it cannot once look to live beyond the grave, for death makes terrible differences, and disarrays all sensual feasts; the body, the pampered lustful body, becomes like a frozen hot-bed, cold, barren and withered; and the world we doted on having forsaken us like a traitor, all the schemes of future dalliance between these two are dissipated like a mist, they have parted asunder, and a yawning gulf of dark immateriality hath come between these antient friends. They shall meet, yes, they shall meet again. Matter again shall invest the spirit, and a world of matter shall arise upon her troubled vision, and she shall eye the spiry flames and the dun smoke of hell; and she

shall bathe in the liquid element of fire, and snuff up the fumes of her sulphureous bed, and at her heart a worm that dieth not shall gnaw. Oh, what a change was that of the luxurious Dives! and what an answer to his complaint—Thou in thy life receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. To avoid this fell conclusion, these sensualists wink hard on death, and will hold no communings with the thoughts of death; or, if they pray for it at all, like that son of Genius who lately met his fate on a foreign shore, they pray for it in the twinkling of an eye, not daring to encounter the reveries and quiet reflections of a sick bed. Well, I pity them not the less that they reject Christian pity. God help and deliver them all! God enable me, or some worthier messenger, to reach them with the tidings of spiritual and everlasting life.

Secondly, Of intellectual or rational life. This is an exalted kind of existence, to which true men in all ages have betaken themselves, in opposition to the true animals, I have represented above. They stand like towers of strength athwart the desolation of ages that hath swept over the reputation of the rest; their names are like the ruins of antient temples and palaces in a desert city, where a level bed of sand hath hidden in darkness all meaner places. A Homer, a Socrates, a Plato, an Archimedes, a Newton, these are the giants of the soul, the plenipotentiaries of intellect, who redeem the reputation of the human

race. These men cared not for their body, but, like St. Paul, they groaned under it, and made their moan in the ear of God, who, listening to their prayer, gave them victory. The intellect which is weighed down with a fleshly load achieved its redemption, it wandered abroad into the regions of the handy-works of God, it dived into the mysteries of the soul, and discoursed over the fields of wisdom, enditing matchless sayings, and dressing feasts of fancy and of reason for all ages of mankind. They are the royal priesthood of mind, sphered above the sphere of kings, great and glorious beyond all heroes and conquerors of the earth. After their example the true men amongst mankind have strove, setting them up for the apostles of their high calling. And in this island we have had in all ages a succession of such men, who have collected libraries which are the armories of intellect, and founded colleges which are its nurseries, and created honours which are its laurels, the honours not of fortune nor of power, nor pride, but the ideal honours of a name or title; which now they have frustrated and made void, by cheapening them down to interest and place and vanity.

I cannot find in my heart to speak against intellect, and, thanks be to God, I am not called by my Christian calling to speak against it. It is a handmaiden of religion, and religion loveth to be adorned at its hands. But must I speak the truth, that it is often a handmaiden of other mistresses with whom religion hath no fellowship? of vanity, of

power, of carnal pleasure, and of filthy lucre. Go to the seats of learning, which intellect decked for herself with chaste and simple ornaments, where she dwelt in retirement from noise and folly, wooing meditation under the cool shade, or forcing her to yield her hidden secrets to midnight research and mortification, what find you generally but pomp parading it under vain apparel, sense rejoicing over feast and frolic, youth doting upon outward distinctions, and age doting on idle and luxurious ease. Such are a sort of sacrilegious ministers in the temple of intellect. They profane its show-bread to pamper the palate, its everlasting lamp they use to light unholy fires within their breast, and show them the way to the sensual chambers of sense and worldliness. This is the intellectual life against which I proclaim that it will not stand before the throne of Judgment. If it be made a passage to any sublunary glory, to places in court or senate, to worldly fortune, to the applause of men and worldly celebration, then die it must when we forsake the earth wherein it sought its treasure. How can it live, how can it live? I ask, in the name of God's consistency. The fine frame of intellect which he gave to constitute for man a crown of glory, and feed him with an undisturbed enjoyment, he hath trampled under foot—sold, as Esau did, his birthright for a mess of meat, or bartered, as Judas did, the life of Christ for a piece of money. Can such abuse of God's gift abide his judgment? But, not content with abusing that which God

claimed as his own gift, and for which he spread out a new field of revelation to expatiate on, and a new paradise in the hope of which to rejoice,—to set him at nought, and lust after worldly vanities, what can this look for but to be twice condemned? It cannot look to carry the world it doted upon away with it into the spiritual world—the world stays behind to play with other fools; it hath its dwellings in romote solitary regions. Or will God play the liar, and build another world for its sake, instead of that promised world which it would not hear or take a thought of? It is vanity to entertain any such imagination.

Now, let religious people blame me or not, I will declare, for I have sat down to express all my thoughts freely and fearlessly upon Judgment to Come—that if intellect, foregoing these worldly prizes, will for itself cultivate itself, and guard against self-idolatry, it will come by a natural course to speculate upon the invisible God, like Plato and Socrates in the days of old, and the Bible will come to its hungering and thirsting after divine knowledge, like a stream of water to the thirsty hart in a parched land; and it will rear its house by the clear margent of the waters of life, and therein dwell till God do separate it into his nearer neighbourhood and closer fellowship. Such intellectual examinations brought Locke and Newton, after they had exhausted the faculties of the mind in research, to lay them down at length, and drink refreshment from the river of the Lord's revelations, and there to devote the

whole enjoyment of their souls. But such intellectual creatures as find their beloved field in mere physical research, contented with any new thing in nature or in art, that is, your mere naturalists, often the weakest and idlest of men; such others as are satisfied with the speculations of politics, and have their feast in the triumphs of a party, or in being themselves the leaders of a party; or such others who gape with open mouth for whatever the daily press may serve them withal, devouring with equal relish novels, poems, news, and criticism, and, so they can hold discourse about such wrecks, which ever float upon the edge of oblivion's gulf, think they have purchased to themselves a good degree in intellect. Oh! what shall I say to such? Why should it have fallen to my lot to rebuke such a generation? or to what shall I liken them? They are like the spectators in a theatre, who look upon the stage, and behold its changing aspect, and listen to its various speeches, who have as good a right to claim the merit of being good players because they look upon the players, or to understand the mystery of the scenery, because they see the changes of the scene, or to be men of genius because they listen to a drama of genius,—as have that reading and talking generation to claim any place or degree in the world of intellect because they read and retail to each other what is constantly teeming from the press. Not that I would undervalue such an employment as perusing what the mind of man is continually producing, but that I would estimate the value and

duration of that sentimental life in which so many pride themselves. And I estimate it as a mere game or pastime of the faculties, a dissipation of the eye of the mind, producing upon the intellectual man the same effects which are produced upon the sensual man by the dissipation of his eye among the various scenes and curiosities of the world. This sort of life also must pass away at death, for its food will then be at an end, and its excitement at an end; and in the spiritual and eternal world, with which it held no communion, it can expect to find no enjoyment, unless God, as hath been said, for the sake of those that never cried him mercy or obeyed any word, should make himself an egregious liar.

Thirdly, Of moral life. This is a still higher reach of human nature than that which is mentioned above, for it consists not in the speculation and discovery of truth, but in living after the rules and measures of truth. It is a sacrifice of the heart in obedience to the understanding, a conformity of the will to the deliberations of reason, and greatly to be praised wherever it is found; and, though it reacheth not into the regions of life spiritual, it is far above the regions of life sensual and life intellectual, which leads me often to wonder by what strange perversion of their office the advocates of spiritual life are often found railing against this its nearest resemblance. For, moral life is not shunned by spiritual life, but embraced like a younger, tenderer sister. By religion morals are sustained,

enlarged, purified, sanctified, and eternally rewarded. And in those parts, where there is no speaking word nor breathing spirit to awaken spiritual life, God will hold the people responsible for nothing more than moral life. But in those countries where the means for enkindling spiritual life is in every man's possession, and its saving uses known to him, he cannot be guiltless for withholding from using them, or desiring to possess the new virtue which they breathe. Moral men are therefore not excusable for refusing to enter into communion with God, and enrolling themselves under the banner of Christ, who is the great teacher of pure morals, the great martyr in their behalf, and their great rewarder. And though I would speak to them in soft and gracious language, yet to them no less than to others the truth must be spoken, that this life of their's hath its limitation at the grave. There they put its limitations of their own free will. They will not have it extended to eternity—else why do they refuse to devote themselves to God no less than to the well-being of their own souls and of mankind! It indicates in them a want of that subordination which every creature oweth to its Creator, a want of reverence for his voice, a deadness to his admonitions, and a dislike to his obedience, thus to labour, as mere moralists do, without attending to his word or to the ministry of his Son. It is not that God loves to have good done only in his own way, but he wishes to have it done as extensively as possible: and, being alive

to the weakness of motives merely moral, he addressed us with spiritual considerations, that not only the well-disposed and the naturally-benevolent, but that *all* may derive a strength to follow a moral and benevolent course. And for any one to stand in his own strength, and refuse the sustenance of the hand that made him; to stand still at that point in which his natural constitution hath placed him; is, to my thought, a very great contempt of God, a monstrous rebellion from our proper Head, and a lawless insurrection against his sovereignty. And such conduct can look for no better treatment than to pay the penalty of unrepented sin and unforsaken wickedness, which is sorrow and death.

Men are constituted in various moulds, and the fashion of their inward man is as various as their natural face or outward condition. Some are weak in reason, and some are strong; some are weak in passion, and some are strong; some are open and enlarged of heart, some narrow and confined. In some, mercy hath a sovereign seat; in others, justice; in others, avarice; in others, benevolence; in others, selfishness; and, in others, cruelty. And though they had been made in one common mould, the various aspects of the physical and moral world would have wrought them into various tempers. Some inhabit the peaceful country, nursed amidst health and simplicity; others the crowded city, preyed on by disease and vice; some planted in posts of terrible danger, others of ease and safety; some brought up under favour-

able aspects of piety, friendship, instruction, and example; others orphans, outcast and ignorant. And then there is the diversity of times and seasons; some born and cradled in revolutions, and cast into the iron age of war; some under the olive reign of peace; some under superstition and tyranny, others under freedom; some under the eye and light of knowledge, others under darkness and the shadow of death. Hence it cometh to pass, that thousands and tens of thousands, and millions of a generation, are never able to extricate themselves out of their dark and pitiful conditions into the intellectual and moral condition upon which we have bestowed our praise, but continue dead and sensual, in a miserable and pitiful plight, which makes the heart weep tears of blood.

Therefore, in the fulness of time, it pleased the Lord to make known another kind of life, differing from all the rest, which might be within the reach of all forms and conditions of manhood, of every kindred and nation and tongue. This is spiritual life, of which the essential characteristic is to walk with God, as it is the characteristic of all the rest to walk without him. Human nature hath lost the secret of its Creator, and of the end for which it was created; and among the various inventions of superstition, no people have by any chance stumbled upon the knowledge of the true God. There is nothing within the region of absurdity and untruth which the popular creed hath not adopted, this only being excepted, the living God, who made heaven and earth and all

that dwelleth therein. The intellectual man, when putting forth his utmost power, in the absence of the sensual and the presence of the moral man, did in antient times make wonderful reaches into the arcana of the divine existence, but had no power to bring his discoveries home to the mechanical, unspeculative people, whose superstitions he was fain to countenance, under the painful conviction, that nothing more refined could consist with their sensual, unintellectual modes of life. He had the plant, but he could not propagate the plant. It would not root in the common soil. The knowledge of the one God would not root; if it had it would have borne fruit.

But now the knowledge of the true God hath been revealed, not as the conclusion of difficult investigation and research, but by description and delineation, as one man describes his fellow man. The attributes of his character are developed in his word; his works are made known; his providential care over the earth, his dispensation of grace for the recovery of man, his whole nature is revealed in manifest light, and presented before the human mind to work its proper effect. Now, though few men be acquainted with the historical evidence which authenticates this record of Jehovah, there are very few who can shut their eyes to the excellency of the divine nature there recorded, or hinder it from pleasing the faculties of their mind. They may not know the painter, or understand the sources of his information, but the picture is such as they cannot hinder their eyes

from admiring. The character of God, contained in the Scriptures, is to the mind of the common people what, to illustrate great things by small, the Apollo Belvidere, or any other ancient statue is to the eye of the common people. There is a rushing conviction of its perfectness. It fixeth in the mind. It rules in the mind over all meaner forms. It is the model of all form, and that which we could wish to resemble. There is in the minds of men those moral tastes which make the God of the Christians, when he hath been comprehended, to take a root in the conviction and admiration as the most perfect model of character, the sublime of moral nature. They cannot help themselves from standing in awe of the omnipotent, omniscient, Almighty Holy One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity. And into this instinct of human nature I resolve the first and earliest power which the Gospel hath over men, and here I place the first germ of the spiritual life.

Now, this universal instinct to admire the perfect attributes of our God doth supersede at once the distinctions of intellectual and unintellectual, civilized and uncivilized, and make the whole human race alike impressible by it, as they are alike impressible by justice, benevolence, or power. And accordingly it is found to be so in all stages and conditions of man to which the missionary addresses himself. He may be resisted by false notions of God, which, like artificial tastes, are supported by the pride of antiquity and the shame of change, as he is among the Brahmins

and the Mahomedans, where the vicious notion is defended by all the interests of society; but whenever he meets with a nation not already duped and deluded, no matter how degraded, be they Hottentots, Africans, or Greenlanders, he never fails to bring them under awe and reverence of the God whom he declareth. But though in the general we take this acceptableness of our God to human nature to be the first rudiments of the spiritual man, we give the chief influence to that part of his nature which is revealed in the redemption and salvation of the world. The attributes of the almighty and all-wise Creator overawe the affection, and, being coupled with those of the Beholder and the Judge, they strike a damp and mute terror, which stupifies and alienates the mind. And no cordial union of affection with the Godhead, no constant love of intercommunion, nor desire of neighbourhood and likeness ariseth until we are brought nigh and reconciled by the manifestation of the Son upon our account. Then fear disperseth and hope awakeneth from the dead; and with hope comes joy, and with joy comes affection, and the mind is lifted into the condition of thinking and speaking and communicating with God. The darkness, and the thick darkness which covered the mind, is not only removed by the light of revelation, but the light which was unapproachable and full of glory is made accessible and full of balmy health. But on the influence of God the Saviour we need not enlarge, having developed it fully in the third part of this argument.

Then, after we have been brought into peace and hope by the revelation of God the Saviour, we are brought into practical confidence and constant communion by the revelation of God the Sanctifier. The fall brought on the obscuration of our being, and under that obscuration a thousand evils crept in upon the soul; Christ doth take the obscuration off, and arise upon our spiritual darkness like the sun of righteousness, but there wanteth some one to dispossess, one by one, the evils which have the dominion over us. This is done by the revelation of the Holy Ghost or God the Sanctifier. Christ doth undo what the fall did; he doth disarm the powers of darkness, and turn the tide of evil which set against us; or, in scriptural figure, he is begotten in us the *hope* of glory; but to tend the new birth the Holy Ghost is revealed, who doth, like a watchful nurse, rear the infant spiritual creature, and defend it from the powers of darkness which ever take counsel against its life. This assurance of divine help at hand begetteth prayer and activity and devout dependance upon God. It also instructeth us in our weakness, and leadeth us to observe the dangers which surround us, and to perceive all the position and intrenchments which the enemy hath, in the forms and customs of human life, and in the affections of the soul within. A constant watchfulness, a constant frame of prayer, activity of well-doing, and a constant communion with God, take place, within the soul, of that distance and alienation which is its natural estate.

All this I trace to the revelation which God hath given of himself in his holy word, and being addressed to parts and properties of human nature which are common to the minds of all men, as eyes and ears and hands are common to their outward frame, it doth affect them all alike, and produce every where that spiritual life of which I stated the great characteristic to consist in walking with God. The nature of God becomes spread over every thing natural and moral, outward and inward, as light is spread over the earth. We are reminded of Him always, and never at a distance from him; we live in him, we move in him, and in him we have our being. He is incorporated with all we admire and love and wish; the soul of our ambition, the spirit of our joy. We hate what he hates, and what he pities we endeavour to help; the charities of his nature we copy, his works we limitate, his thoughts we meditate, his ways we strive to pursue. We are in God new creatures, we are partakers of the divine nature, we are members of Christ, we suffer with him, we are crucified with him, we are risen with him to newness of life, we walk with him, and there remaineth unto us no condemnation nor wrath to come.

It is not possible to mistake this life, of which I treat, from sensual or intellectual or moral life, for it is distinguished in every action by being a life in God, that is, in reference to God's will, in dependance upon God's grace, in hope of God's forgiveness, and in pursuit of God's favour,—where-

as all the other are distinguished in every action by being a life out of God; in the first case, at the instigation of sense, and to gratify sense; in the second case, at the instigation of intellect, and to discover the relations of truth, and to utter them, for the entertainment of ourselves and others; in the third case, to please the moral sense, and benefit the condition of men, and enjoy the rewards of a well-regulated and benevolent mind; but in not one of the three to please the divine Being, and advance his honour and glory upon earth. I am aware that there is a moral life and an intellectual life also, which do not keep the Deity out of sight, the one using his moral rules, the other speculating of his nature and revelations; and, in as far as they do so, they are to be approved; but they do not pass into spiritual life, until He becomes not the part but the whole of our desire, to whom we dedicate all our powers of action; and until we are alive to the natural alienation and unwillingness of our minds, and find reconciliation and favour and new life through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. After which resurrection old things pass away, and our former communion with God turns out to have been no more than a name to live, or a shadow of the thing which we now possess.

Nevertheless, while I thus endeavour to keep the marches clear between spiritual life and the other three, I am not to set forth the death of the sensual, intellectual, and moral man, as necessary to the life of the spiritual man. They need to be put to death

in as far as they are supreme over us. In their mastery they are unmastered, but not in their existence extinguished. Their alienation to God is destroyed, but their action is not forbidden. They are turned to his service, brought and laid upon his altar, there sanctified, thence taken, and ever after consecrated to his glory. And the eye continues to regale itself with the vision of natural scenery, and to praise the Lord for his goodness to the children of men; and the ear tastes the dulcet voice of melody made in her Maker's praise; and love and elegance and taste, and stately mansions and adorned fields and flowery gardens, and feast and mirth, and every other decoration of life, are enjoyed by the spiritual man with a new relish, because he is spiritual. And now he layeth on every faculty of his mind in the full scent of truth, for he would write his Maker's glory with the sun-beams of science, and draw forth his praise from the regions of knowledge. And now he gratifies his moral nature with a licence never before enjoyed. He finds its food in every relation and every occupation of life, and becomes a light to the blind, a help to the needy, a defence to the orphan and fatherless and unbefriended, a blessing unto all. And whereas the Great Spirit, whom he would now resemble, is unwearied in creating enjoyments for physical and sensual nature—he never ceases to take them with a thankful and joyful mind; and whereas the Great Spirit is a very fountain of intelligence, who hath made depths of knowledge for us to

fathom, and heights of understanding for us to reach—he ever striveth to know and search out the deep things of God; and whereas the Great Spirit he would resemble is unwearied in doing good to every creature out of his ample storehouse—he travels in his footsteps, and out of the storehouse given to him, does the same unwearied office of well-doing to all within his reach.

For, truly, I abominate the spirit of ascetic and ignorant devotion, which to make men spiritual would deprive them of the recreations of sense, and spoil them of the high pursuits of intellect; would make them crouch every noble part of manhood, disguise every high propensity of nature, school into slavishness every ardent imagination, and bind in shackles every high adventure; in order to present unto God a minced and emasculated pigmy of that creature which he made a little lower than the angels, and a fraction of those talents which he made able to scan the highest heavens. Away with the notion to the cells of monks and the grates of nuns and the caves of hermits——it is not for the honour of man, nor for the glory of God. Spiritual life is that which pervades every thing with a divine vigour—stirring up and awakening lethargic faculties, calling in roving and wicked thoughts, husbanding time, enlightening conscience, piloting all the courses, filling all the sails of action; that we may make a demonstration for God ten times greater than the demonstration we were making for sense, for intellect, or for morals.

Now this spiritual life, you will observe, is the life of God within the soul; it is a return of all the faculties to his neighbourhood and communion, from that distance to which they were banished at the fall. And to one so created anew in the image of God, the curse is altogether taken off. For the curse consisted in the death of the body to sensible things, and the death of the spirit to things spiritual and divine. Now, though the body is not made immortal, yet it is assured of immortality by Christ's resurrection, which is the evidence of its own immortality, first-fruits of them that sleep. And the other part of the curse, the death of the soul to perceptions of God and works of godliness, is taken off, for the soul hath been made instinct with a constant divinity of thought, and discharges all its functions as in the presence of God. So that the whole curse is in effect taken off. We are restored to our heritage of life, and there remaineth for us no second condemnation.

This may seem mysterious, but it is the most beautiful, and the most true of all mysteries, and it is the key to all the writings of St. Paul. I wish I could illustrate it at length, but I rather turn to the practical object of endeavouring to stir you up to the attainment of this spiritual life, by this awful consideration, that under the Christian dispensation none, in whom this new birth and regeneration have not been wrought, can enter into the kingdom of heaven. I have shown how sensual life must be cut off by

death; but spiritual life hath in its very constitution an eternity. It consulteth not for the flesh which is mortal, nor for the world which is transient, nor for the approbation of men who decline like a shadow, but for the approbation of God alone who is eternal. Its aspirations are to heaven which changeth not, its treasures are in heaven where nothing corrupteth. Its faith is in Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; its communion is with the Spirit which abideth for evermore. The whole elements of its existence are eternal, and wherever this new man is, there is also the undivided assurance of life eternal.

These forms of carnal life, (which are every one distinguished by their preference of some of creation's forms, or nature's enjoyments, to the neglect and forgetfulness of God who created the world, and enriched the heart with its varied capacities of pleasure,) do all lead unto condemnation, and the glory of them all closes with present existence; but the spiritual life, which consults for the honour and glory of God and his church, will stand in judgment, and receive the reward of its self-denial and faithfulness. 'To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace.'

Now, finally, as this spiritual character is essential unto salvation from the wrath to come, I hold myself called upon to open up the channels through which it flows into the soul, and the mighty operation by which it is begotten. In doing which office for the sake of immortal souls, I think it first necessary to declare and

avow, that nature hath in herself no strength, nor the wisdom of the world any guidance for that spiritual course of life whereof I am to disclose the pure fountains. Nature unassisted and the world unsubdued are its greatest enemies; and if you expect to carry any one point in it by ordinary resources of knowledge, or by ordinary force of resolution, you will labour in vain to the end of your days, and die worse than you began. This may appear wild and mystical to those who have not studied or tried the regeneration of life and character which Christ requires, but it is in perfect unison with the nature of man. I allow to nature all her powers, and to the world all her accomplishments of grace and honour, and freely yield to them the credit of being able of their ownselves, unaided by God, to bring forth all the specimens of philosophic, intellectual, moral, and patriotic men, whereof antient and modern times can boast. The greater part of those noble characters, in peace and war, which fill the pages of history: the greater part of those who flourish under the eye and patronage of honour and glory in our own times—your statesmen, your scholars, your uncorrupted senators, your generous philanthropists—are the offspring of cultivated powers of nature and favourable aspects of the world; and when I resign these excellent shows of character up to the province of gifted nature and happy fortune, it will be seen that I mean not to disparage the powers of natural life, while, I say again, that they avail not the

least; but, on the other hand, impede in producing the spiritual life, which is indispensable to salvation. It is not to disparage nature and the world that I preface my inquiry with this avowal of their weakness, but it is to withdraw the mind, from these delusory regions of power and wisdom, to the proper region, whence alone are to be had that power and wisdom which furnish the spiritual man for every good word and work.

Had the Almighty kept aloof from all interference in our affairs, and given no supplement to our knowledge, or lent no aid to our endeavours, then is it not manifest that our theology would have been what it was in Greece or Rome or antient Britain, what it is still in nations that know not the revelations of God? Our distinctions of learning, of policy, of heroism, of rank and of fortune, might perhaps have been much what they were in antient civilized times; but it is most evident, that of spiritual life, which consists of love to God and living to his glory, we could have known not a glimmering; knowing neither God, nor wherein his glory consists, nor how he was to be served. It is to the pains he has taken to inform us, and ingratiate himself with human nature; to the revelations he has made of his love and amiable character, of his free forgiveness of our sins, of his ample reward and plentiful help to holiness of life; that we are to impute any progress we make in a new nature and a nearer resemblance to his divine image. Therefore the Almighty, the doing of the Almighty,

the free grace and gift of God, not nature's innate powers, nor the world's patronage and approbation, is what we have to thank for any progress we have made—is what we have to look to for any progress we have to make, in the life which Scripture calleth spiritual or divine; and which I have declared to be the only deliverance from wrath to come.

The evangelical preachers therefore are right in referring all past progress, and deriving all hope of future progress from free unmerited grace, from the influence and power of the Spirit of God; and the moral preachers who uphold man's power to aid and abet the work, and man's right to share in the glory, are doubtless in the wrong, inasmuch as human nature, in her most gifted forms and in her most favourable moods and conditions, did never win any way towards the divinity, till the divinity himself gave the knowledge to inform her, the impulse to move her, and the motives to carry her on. But the evangelical preachers, as they are called, though right in the main drift of their discoursing, are defective, it seems to me, in the wisdom of their details; and herein, as I think, is their chief defect, in giving too little weight to the word of God, which they hold to be a dead inefficient letter until the Spirit of God put meaning into its passages. This is at once to lock up the great storehouse of truth, which God hath in every part accommodated to the wants and faculties of man, and to leave the world in as starving a state as ever. We are out at sea once more, and have no star to guide our way.

I, as a preacher, cannot move a step with an unregenerate man, if so be that we cannot come into contact upon the word of God. I must shut up the prophecy and seal the testimony, if so be that to his understanding it is a blank and unmeaning legend; and we must go a cruising over the handy works and providence of God, if so be that his word is dark to us as darkest midnight. Now I do not wish to go to war with the evangelical preachers, I love them so well; but I cannot help challenging them, why they preach, as they wisely do, the truths of Christ crucified to the unregenerate, if so be the unregenerate can by no means lay hand upon any of these truths? All their practice confutes their theory, that the word of God is a riddle unresolvable, a mystery unsearchable, which cannot be found out by the understanding of men. And yet, neither are they altogether wrong in this matter, upon which it is very important to apprehend the exact truth, more especially as it is a truth most easy to be apprehended, and most necessary to the progress of spiritual life, and the deliverance of the wrath to come.

They are right, in as far as this goes, that the truth revealed in the word of God concerning his own nature, concerning our redemption, concerning creation and providence and futurity, concerning the duty of man to his Maker, and our duty to each other in a spiritual sense; that all this truth, human nature could never have discovered; and therefore she ought for ever to acklowledge herself

debtor to God for all the effects which it produceth upon her own condition and upon the condition of the world. Therefore, here again we are at one, as to the party to whom all the gratitude and glory should be rendered. But so far from giving into their position, that the Bible is a sealed book to men in their natural estate, I hold this diametrically opposite position, That there is not a book which, being read with all the faculties of the natural man, will produce upon the natural man so strong an impression; will so exalt his imagination, so convince his mind, so rebuke his sins, so captivate his affections, so overawe his wilfulness, arrest all the thoughts of his mind, and touch all the feelings of his heart. That in truth it is an arrow, or rather a quiver full of arrows, aimed with a divine dexterity, to strike into the inward parts of men. And, if any one ask me to prove this position, I have my own experience to refer to, which, with a constant witness, testifieth that God's word hath been quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and I have the experience of all converted men of whom I have read, in whose conversion the word of God was the main instrument; I have David's and Paul's constant declarations, that it is able to make one wise unto salvation.

Now, when I have often urged upon the Evangelical brethren the necessity of pressing their people to the word of God as a very mentor in all cases and conditions of life, and the folly of preaching them away from it by casting clouds and darkness and

mystery around its approach, stating unto them what hath been stated above, they have always met me with this reply: If the book of God be intelligible to natural men, how come they to remain so ignorant of it, and so disaffected to it? To this I answer, that they read it but little, many of them not at all; that when they do read it, they read it often for form's sake, and consequently derive no benefit, because they seek none; although even then it sendeth quivering thoughts into their inmost breasts: or they read it for taste's sake, and are gratified in all the critical and imaginative parts of the mind, farther than which they aimed not; but if they read for edification's sake, to know God and Christ and human responsibility, then it never fareth to any reader to read in vain. But what fruit of conviction cometh out of it, they ask? That is another question, to be touched immediately. Yet that seed was as good seed, as able to strike root and bear increase, which fell by the way-side, among thorns, and on the face of barren rocks, as that which fell into the genial soil: so also are those impressions made upon the natural man by his study of the Word, as fit to come forth into the new birth and the spiritual life, as those which actually do generate in spiritual men; but they hold not good, because of counteracting influences, kindred to those in the parable; the devil plucks them away, the hot sun of lust and pleasure scorches them, or the thorns of worldly avocations choke them. Yet, though they issue not in fruit by these impressions,

which this Word doth carry in every bosom, and which God would bless were his blessing cared for or sought for, by these impressions will natural men be judged and condemned in the terrible day of the Lord. Let not God's word be blamed, therefore, which is like the sun to the inward soul, heating it and inflaming it to what is good; but let the wicked preferences which men give to every other impression of pleasure, vanity, interest and worldly occupation, be blamed, and let them be taught to relax their love of these, that the other may grow into its natural strength and fruitfulness.

Do I, then, while I thus would unveil the written word of God as a document of salvation, and a patent of everlasting life to every one who looketh upon it with a reflective mind; do I assert that the natural man seeth into it as deeply as doth the spiritual man? No. Neither doth one spiritual man see into it as another spiritual man. 'Tis a mere glimmering, a faint ray and streak of dawn we perceive at first, but not the less to be noted or prized as the hope of coming day. It groweth and groweth till the whole mind be overspread, and the whole heart be warmed, and the whole life fructified. It waxeth more useful as we use it more. According as we do more, we understand more. According as we enter into the obedience of it, we taste its more exquisite sweetness. As nature yieldeth, the spirit quickeneth; as the old man waxeth fainter under his crucifixion, the new man waxeth stronger

to his resurrection. And what needeth there more talk about this simple matter, than to say with the Psalmist, The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clear, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Therefore, so far from shutting up and sealing the precious word of God with any cover, we open it to your minds and hearts as a very mine of treasure and inexhaustible storehouse of food, the armory out of which you are to be equipped, defended, reinforced, made valorous and victorious in spiritual life. History feedeth the natural knowledge of man; commerce feedeth his natural appetites with all the various produce of the earth; poetry feedeth his fancy; courts cultivate his policy; war, his valorous chivalry; and arts, his inexhaustible skill; by the combination of which, and other active agents, all the varieties of character, from the king to the peasant, are forged out. But, alas! not one of them availeth one jot to call forth the spiritual man. They will stifle and slay his life when it hath been procreated; to give it birth, they avail no more than they do to restore life again to the cold clay of one deceased. So true are the averments of Scripture, that this world is dead in trespasses and sins, and that the natural man knoweth not

the things of the Spirit of God. These forms of manhood, forged in the great workshop of the world, never dream that there is a nobler form still; and when it cometh out in its gracefulness before them, they know not its worth, but hold it in derision and tread it under foot. And yet there are many of these noble specimens of manhood who peruse the word of God from year to year, without coming to recognise that, with all their pomp and slendid accomplishments, they are hateful in the sight of God, and will be dismissed for ever from his righteous presence. But the word of God, though they catch not his meaning, is not veiled from their apprehension, but their apprehension Satan darkeneth and veileth so that no ray of its piercing intelligence can reach them through the veils of the world, the devil, and the flesh.

This brings us to the true form in which the evangelical preacher should put this position; not, that the word of God is unintelligible to nature, but, that the mind may be so occupied with a thousand possessors as not to apprehend it. He should lay the blame, not upon the obscurity of the word, but upon the occupations of the mind. Then he should set forth, as our Lord doth in the parable of the sower, the various enemies which hinder its influence, carefully detecting and uncovering the veils which Satan casteth over each class of readers while they peruse the holy text, obscuring all its light, and leaving the spirit in as great ignorance of God as it found him. The Jew

readeth, but there is a veil over his eye while he readeth Moses and the prophets; the Mahomedan readeth, and blasphemes while he readeth; the Hindoo readeth, but gathers no savour of truth. When Missionaries deal with the Jew, the Mahomedan and the Hindoo, what method do they follow?—they do not blast their purpose by telling the people the book has no meaning in it to their unregenerate eye, but they compare texts with the Jew, they outargue the Mahomedan, and they try to rouse the slumbering reason of the Hindoo; they deal skilfully with the men, studying their several dilemmas of ignorance and prejudice, and doing their endeavours to extricate them into the clear apprehension of truth. Now, in the name of consistency, I ask, why we should not employ the self-same method with those at home? to whom, however dark the Word may be supposed, it surely speaks a more intelligible language, being believed by them, revered by them, and written in the language of their mother, than it doth to these foreigners, who know not its language, believe not its divine original, and hate those who seek to persuade them of its truth. And yet with the foreigner you take wise and skilful measures to couch the eye of his ignorant mind; to the man at home you present the cold blank coverlet of the book, saying, The inward spirit of it is to him quite incomprehensible.

Oh! I hate such ignorant prating, because it taketh the high airs of orthodoxy, and would blast me as a heretical liar, if I go to teach the people

that the word of God is a well-spring of life, unto which they have but to stoop their lips in order to taste its sweet and refreshing waters, and be nourished into life eternal. But these high airs and pitiful pelting words are very trifling to me, if I could but persuade men to dismiss all this cant about the mysteriousness and profound darkness of the word of God, and sift their own inward selves to find out what lethargy of conception or blind of prejudice, what unwillingness of mind, or full possession of worldly engagements, hath hitherto hindered them from drinking life unto their souls from the fountain of living waters. But if I go about to persuade my brethren against the truth of experience, against the very sense and meaning of revelation, against my own conviction, that they may read till their eye grows dim with age without apprehending one word, unless it should please God by methods unrevealed to conjure intelligence into the hieroglyphic page—what do I but interpose another gulf between man and his Maker, dash the full cup of spiritual sweets from his lips, and leave him as lonely, helpless, and desolate, as he was before the lion of the tribe of Judah did take the book of God's hidden secrets, and prevail to unloose the seals thereof!

Therefore, I cast off their ignorant and scholastic methods, and expound to my brethren, for whose regeneration I travail as one in birth, that if they will but approach this book of the Lord's in a reverent, humble, and teachable disposition,

it will correct, reprove, and instruct them in righteousness, and lay the seeds of that everlasting life which we have undertaken in the strength of God to disclose. This book is the voice of the Spirit of God, which, if we disrespect, we cut ourselves off from all his further communings. They talk as if a stroke of the Spirit were needed before the Word can be perused. I say, No. The Word, which is the legible Spirit, must be had in reverence, and perused and thought on, and altogether treated as it deserves, or else God will give no further inspirations. What, in the name of divine wisdom and of common sense, will God allow all the visitations of his Spirit to prophet, priest and seer, which were committed to writing that men might know and stand in awe of him—will he allow the visitation of his own Son, his doctrines, his death, his resurrection, and his salvation—will he allow the legacy of spiritual gifts and graces promised and pressed upon the children of men—will he allow all this record and testament of divine gifts to go into a kind of desuetude, to die into obscurity and death, to be misused, neglected and spurned; and to one that is so holding them in contempt and neglect, come with a divine and masterful effusion of his grace, and enforce upon his unwilling soul that understanding and regard of his Word which heretofore he had not, or cared not to have? I say not. But, upon the other hand, he will honour his word by testimonies of his Spirit, the residue of which he retaineth in order to honour the record which he hath given. He will give us his Spirit just in pro-

portion to our reverence and use of his Word. The word is the first thing, the Spirit is the next thing, or rather they are two things which should never be parted. Keep aloof from the oracles of God, keep aloof from the places where they are discoursed of, from the companies which fulfil them, and you are not far from the kingdom of Satan. Come to the word, and meditate thereon; go where its truths are proclaimed, watch at the gates where divine wisdom speaketh, and look upon the men whose lives she adorneth, and you are not far from the kingdom of God. Think you not, that because the Ethiopian eunuch read in Isaiah, that Philip was ordered to join himself to his chariot and preach unto him Christ, so if you read, as he read, seeking intelligence, God will send an interpreter of what is dark to your hand, or send the unction and teaching of the Spirit over your very bosom?

And yet, while I will continue so long as I live to oppose this scarfing up of the glory of the everlasting Word, I will do justice to the motive which moves the evangelical preachers to this unwary and most ruinous procedure. They think that they secure to God the entire glory of the conversion of all men out of darkness into light, by stripping the word of God of all intrinsic efficacy. Now, sooner than divide the glory between God and another, might the tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! But what, do they mean to say, that the word of God is not a power of God, or that the glory given to the Word is abstracted from himself? The word of God I hold to be the

sum total of all the world knows of God. It is his picture, his procedure, his mind, his will, his truth. It is the annals of our creation, our providence, our redemption. It is his book of arguments, his book of persuasions, his book of promises. The knowledge which is in it is the food of the new man; the acts of divine love which are in it are the consolation of the new man; the assurances of divine aid which are in it are his strength and his consolation. And they are guilty of the most daring profanation who would take the glory from the Word, wherever they may please to bestow it. They that shut it either by force of power or by force of persuasion, or by force of a refining theology, against any mortal, do make themselves obnoxious to the first and last imprecations of the New Testament, and ten thousand denunciations of the Old. But do I, in thus giving a seat of highest honour and most powerful authority to the word of God, abstract honour and influence from God himself or the Spirit of God? God forbid! Every truth in the revealed Word is a treasure sent from God to a needy world, for the want of which that world would fare the worse; and whatever benefits it doth impart are to be ascribed to God, as simply as if they had been imparted at first hand, and visibly from heaven. God, knowing human nature, that it was a fine, intellectual, moral structure, capable of being moved by ethereal and lofty truth, and of being won over to right by argument and affection rather than tyrannic force, hath, out of a high

respect and in wise accommodation to our faculties, presented in his word such aliment as the soul of man rejoiceth in. For the soul, like the body, hath its wise and intricate structure, and that knowledge which it taketh in, like the food which we eat, setteth on work a thousand organs, which, healthily acted upon by the wholesome nourishment, do digest and transform the same, and bring forth strength and beauty and grace. And as to God, who sendeth food, we ascribe the glory of our bodily strength which that food refresheth and upholdeth; so to God, who hath sent his Word to be the food of the divine life, we ought equally to ascribe the divine life which that Word engenders and maintains. I do allow, at the same time, that as unwholesome food and irregular living do corrupt the body, and make all its organs sickly and diseased; so the use of this world's ungodly maxims, and the observance of their evil customs, as well as the natural corruption of the soul itself, have communicated various disorders and derangements to the framework of the spirit of man. And I am far from alleging that there is no necessity for a divine regeneration of human nature by the Spirit of God. On the office of the Spirit in building up spiritual life I shall immediately speak. My argument now is not against his operation, but in behalf of the operation of the Word. I do not wish to disparage the Spirit, but I will not have the Word disparaged as it is wont to be. For the Word is the audible voice of the Spirit, his

letter to us of remonstrance, of love, of entreaty; which neglecting, we shall have no closer, more inward admonition; which paying respect and giving heed to, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, the day shall dawn, and the day-star arise on our hearts.

Therefore, if those that are meditating to stand in the day of judgment would prosper in their hearts' desire, they must address their souls to the perusal of God's word, and meditate it with their whole hearts; believing all its representations of God's goodness, and justice, and truth; receiving all God's gifts of creation, and providence, and redemption, as an earnest of his further gifts of sanctification and everlasting life. They must not only read, but reflect; they must not only reflect, but they must discourse and entertain discourse upon it. They must not only receive it, but reject that which opposeth it, with all the habits which contravene it: in desiring and doing which, they should repose their trust upon God, and give praise to him, for they are reading, reflecting, and acting upon that which he bestowed. Their travelling with his word they ought to regard as a travelling with himself. If ever they detach the word from the mouth and heart of him that speaketh it, then it will become a snare to withdraw them from God; but if they keep in mind, that when it instructs God instructs; when it entreats God entreats; when it breathes tenderness God breathes tenderness; when it offers God offers; when it threatens God threatens: then I declare before all

wise and pious men, I see not what evil can accrue; I rather wonder that all good should not accrue from the greatest and the closest travelling with the word of God.

While the soul inhereth in the word, dwelling and feeding thereon, it ought to inhere in the Spirit of God, with whose word it communeth; just as when you hear a man speak, you do not separate his words from the soul which utters them, unless you believe him a deceiver, which, if you believe God to be, I pray you to cast his word aside. For what are words? Words, if I may so speak, are a body to the soul; finer, more expressive, more varied than the fleshly body. By them she doth express her unseen emotions and passions to another soul, which, catching the meaning of the same, reacheth forth a kindred implement of being; they communicate with each other, they embrace each other, they rejoice in each other, they dwell in each other, they travel in company over spiritual and intellectual worlds by this airy vehicle of words. Oh, what a glorious invention is this of words! It makes the soul visible, tangible, impressible; enabling it to dwell in many places at once over the habitable earth; it preserveth the soul upon the earth long after the body is dead in the grave; yea, it breaketh the bond of death, and toucheth the clayey lips of the deceased with their wonted fires. We converse with them, we live with them, we call them from their spheres; they come, they tarry, not till the dawn of morn-

ing, or the crowing of morning's messenger, like the spirit of superstition, but they stay with us days and nights and for ever; and we can gather a general assembly of departed worthies, we can have them in our closets, they will instruct us, they will exhort us, they will make us merry; they will make us great and good, and teach us to fulfil the same good and noble offices to those who follow after us.'

Such, even such, is the word of God, a link between the soul of man and the soul of God, a stage whereon heaven meeteth with earth, to bless her needy children. The spirit of man there communeth and consorteth with the spirit of God. The Spirit of God hath also taken the artificial body of words, and putteth forth his feelings to call forth the feelings of man; and the feelings of man come forth to the embodied feelings of the Spirit of God, even as they come forth to the embodied feelings of the spirit of man, because they are embodied after the same fashion and with equal favour. And so it cometh to pass, that communion with the Holy Ghost is engendered, and then the airy vehicle of words is nothing; but if the communion faileth, it must be resorted to again, as the only instrument given by heaven unto men for that sanctifying office.

If ever this recollection goeth out of the mind, that the Word is but the voice of the Spirit, and the instrument of holding intercourse between two spirits, the soul of man and the Spirit of God; if the Spirit of God be not beheld through the trans-

parent screen, exhibiting his various affections towards us; if the screen alone be looked upon, its beauty, its structure, its richness, its usefulness; then evils accrue which I will open up as briefly as I can.

This I have found from experience, that when I perused the word of God without putting it into the mouth of the Spirit of God, and communing with him through that avenue, I have grown in theoretical knowledge of theology and spiritual life, without feeling any thing of its power; my head engaged, my intellect and taste gratified, my heart not humbled, not convinced, not warmed with divine love. And though I knew it to be all the gift of God, I have grown insensible to the giver, and made his written word another field on which to build idolatry of myself, and carry discomfiture upon the weakness and wickedness of others. For, look abroad, and consider the proneness of man to forget his Maker, however enriched and surrounded by his Maker's gifts, to take the glory to himself, and to use all the blessings of God as the ladder upon which to elevate his own ambitious consequence: For example, how Nature becomes the god of the man who turns her into poetry, exhibits her in painting, or rears his tasteful dwelling among her choicest scenes; he sighs over her, and devoutly beholds her, and lauds her with an exalted song, and 'takes his fill from his mother's bosom,' as the profane poet says. Witness again a man who sets his heart upon the bounties of Providence, and stores his house with the first essence

of all things, until it is a very cabinet of rarest and most precious articles; a man whose feast is chosen from a thousand quarters of nature and art, whose wines are well selected and long stored, and his furniture of the finest imagining, and most costly material. This ample possessor becomes an adorer of these goods of Providence, as the other was an adorer of the face of creation; hath generally as little sense of God, whose favourite child he is, and whose best tokens of kindness he hath around him; is as thankless and hardened in heart towards the God of all providence, as the sentimental admirer and painter of Nature is dead to the God who hath dressed Nature in all her lovely charms. Even so, by virtue of this same adoration of the handiwork, and neglect of the great Artificer, if God had fixed the rewards of religion in the diligent perusal of the Bible, and isolated religious enjoyment from himself, as the enjoyment of Providence and Nature, have become isolated by the fall, would mankind have made the Bible a third region of idolatry and self-applause. They would have searched it, I doubt not, and drawn out of it the enjoyment it contained; and many would have trodden its path of improvement, though thorny, as they have trodden the thorny path of science, and the venturous path of lofty poesy; they would have dug the soul out of the little treatise, and transfused into their breast all the nobility which it could give; and, in doing so, have travelled further and further from the God of the Bible, and in his

stead, made a god of the Bible, which wrought in them such distinction, or a god of their distinguished selves; just as they have made a god of Nature's beauty, and of Providence's fulness.

Now, as the Bible is not intended to be a third region of atheism, like as nature and providence by the lapse of this world have become, but is intended to counterwork the alienating influence of these from God, and to generate the closest communion between the Creator and the creature; therefore God hath not made the Scriptures final and all-powerful of themselves, to work any of the graces of the renewed man, but hath required to be conjoined therewith an apprehension of his Spirit's nature, which speaketh through the Scriptures, and a junction of fellow feeling with the Spirit which speaketh. Could the Bible, being kept apart from the Spirit, work one grace, then the credit of that grace were forthwith given to the Bible, as the credit of begetting taste and enjoyments in us is given to nature and the productions of nature; during all the time we were in attaining the grace, we should remove our attention from God to the thing which he had stamped with the power of conferring it; if so of one grace, so of every other. And thus the Christian, through the Word, would have been completed after the same atheistical process, as the poetical man is completed by rendering his worship to nature, and the sensual man by rendering his worship to the goods of providence.

It seems strange thus to speak of the Christian being completed by an atheistical process, seeing to be a Christian means to be in close fellowship with God. But I am speaking of a supposed condition of things, different from the existing one, that the Bible had held within itself the virtue, when properly used, to renew the soul in the Christian image. In that case, I reason, we should take on the alteration, and give the glory to that which had the power of producing it. We might occasionally remember the Author of the book with feelings of admiration and of gratitude; but we would hang the great credit upon ourselves for possessing and improving by such a work. A mathematician gives little of the credit to Euclid or Newton, his teachers; but takes it to himself, and by reflection from himself idolizes the science in the abstract, by which he stands distinguished. Now just as the mathematician glories in mathematics, and upholds the works of mathematicians, thinking not of God who established these mathematical relations in the world, and made the mind of man capable to perceive and communicate the same; so if religion, by the study of a volume or volumes, could be wrought in the soul, those who had taken pains to have it wrought in themselves, would adore religion in the abstract, and the book which taught it, all forgetful, as the man of science, of God who dictated the book, and formed the soul to profit by its means.

It is man's nature to forget God, however much God may do for him; to adore creation, and not

the Creator; to adore the fulness of the earth, not God, who maketh her horn to bud forth pleasantly; and even so if the word of God were enriching us with spiritual graces, we were apt to forget him who gave it, and adore the gift which he had given, and compliment ourselves for possessing and improving it. To prevent such an abstraction of the soul from himself, God hath revealed, that whatever fruits of righteousness his word produceth are due to his Spirit, and that the glory of them should be rendered unto his grace.

This is a revelation of God, not discoverable by human consciousness, and therefore it is apt to be rejected. Men are not conscious of a Divine influence resident within the temple of their soul. They feel no will but their own will, no strength but their own strength. A few Christians do profess an internal commotion, and exhibit an external agony or triumph. But this, even though granted to be genuine, is only at conversion the first stage of their spiritual life, which goes on thereafter without any foreign influence perceptible to themselves. So that all which we are conscious of is the presence of the words and truths of revelation, dwelt upon frequently, believed on implicitly, remembered seasonably, and obeyed in the face of our pleasure, our ease, and all our interests. The influence of the Word, therefore, is the thing which we feel and are conscious of; the influence of the Spirit is the thing which we are not conscious of, but which we are yet desired to believe.

But because it is not known to us by our intimate perceptions, we ought not the less to account it worthy of belief. Heaven is not seen by us, nor the pit of Hell disclosed before us, yet the one enters into our hopes, the other into our fears. God is not visible to us, nor his presence sensible around us, yet do we believe that in him we live and move and have our being. Christ's dwelling-place none of us hath known, nor his voice have we heard, yet at this moment we believe he intercedes for us at the right hand of power. Angelic messengers we believe in, though we cannot behold them cleaving the air in the discharge of their celestial heraldry. The devil's roving commission against the sons of men we believe, and his frequent success against ourselves we believe likewise, though of his voice, enticing to evil, we were never conscious.

If you give up the doctrine of the Spirit's influence upon the heart because you perceive it not, I see not but that you should give up the doctrine of Jesus Christ's being the Son of God, which rests upon no foundation of sense or feeling, but upon revelation alone. The doctrine, likewise, that God is reconciled to men by the death of his Son, which no man believes from having seen God smile upon him, or heard God speak him kind, but from having it revealed by the same blessed Personages who have likewise revealed that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and showeth the things of Christ unto our souls.

No one having the name of Christian, not even

Unitarians themselves, who would steal the fire from off the altar of our heavenly temple, and leave it a cold, unhallowed desolation; yet not even they refuse to acknowledge that God rules in the earth, raising up and pulling down; that he hath the times and seasons of human life in his hand; that he feeds our prosperity, makes our adversity bare; gives and takes away, and is to be acknowledged with reverence in all our lot. This presence of God, through providence, Christians of every name believe. Now, may I ask how they come by this belief. Have they seen God going to and fro upon the earth? have they seen his bared arm, or heard his uplifted voice? What evidence of sense have they, nor evidence of internal feeling—for they do not feel a God touching their hearts with joy—nor infusing the poison of sorrow. When the devil smites the four corners of their house, as he did Job's, or their camels, or their sheep and oxen, how come they to know that it is God who trieth them for their good, except by revelation early instilled into their minds, and therefore almost instinctively believed.

If, then, the truth of God's presence and presidency in our worldly affairs find for itself universal belief amongst Christians, though resting upon revelation alone, and having no foundation either in sight or perception; upon what plea will they reject the doctrine of the Spirit's presence and presidency in the great world of grace, if it be found revealed with the same distinctness? There

ought therefore to be no preliminary objection taken to it upon the grounds of its not being perceptible, but the Scriptures should be searched whether it be so or not.

Rather, upon the other hand, because it is not perceptible, we should entertain it as more akin to the other operations of the invisible God. For, exalting your thoughts a little, conceive the ways of God; look abroad over the world, and what do you behold?—Noiseless nature putting forth her buds, and drinking the milk of her existence from the distant sun? Where is God? he is not seen, he is not heard:—where is the sound of his footsteps—where the rushing of his chariot wheels—where is his storehouse for this inhabited earth—where are the germs of future plants, the juices of future fruits—and where is the hand dividing its portion to every living thing, and filling their hearts with life and joy? Lift your thoughts a little higher; behold the sun, doth he, when preparing to run his race, shake himself like a strong man after sleep, and make a rustling noise, and lift up his voice to God for a renewal of his exhausted strength? Doth the pale-faced and modest moon, which cometh forth in the season of the night, make music in the still silence to her Maker's praise? Do the stars in their several spheres tell to mortal sense the wondrous stories of their births? Again turn your thoughts inward upon yourselves, and say if your manly strength did grow out of infant helplessness with busy preparations and noisy workmanship, as the chiseled

form of man groweth out of the quarried stone? In the still evening, when you lay you down wearied and worn out, doth your strength return during the watches of the sleepy and unconscious night by noise and trouble, as a worn-out machine is refitted by the cunning workman? Tell me how intelligence grows upon the unconscious babe; where are the avenues of knowledge, and by what method doth it fix itself?

Yet, though God maketh not his arm bare through all the earth, and hath no heralds of his praise stationed in the lofty heavens; and though in the wondrous recesses of human nature his presence be no where sensibly felt, who doth not believe that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein; that the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork; that he hath breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and that the inspiration of God hath given us understanding! Go not, then, to take objection, when God puts in for the same unseen, unfelt influence in the region most proper to him of all, the region of man's recovery into his lost image. He asks to be acknowledged in the progress of our spirits in holiness, as he is acknowledged in the progress of our fortunes in the world. He asks to be acknowledged in the sustenance of our spiritual, as he is acknowledged in the sustenance of our natural, lives. He asks the devout dependance for spiritual strength, food, and promotion, which we are wont to render for our natural strength, food, and promo-

tion. And upon what principle can we refuse to the Spirit of God the same sovereignty over our inner man, which we yield to the providence of God over our outer man? They lie equally beyond the region of proof and experience, both being within the region of pure revelation.

Now, though providence be most devoutly acknowledged, it doth not alter in any thing our endeavours to procure success. The pious farmer, who bows night and morning before God for his blessing, and with a devout heart contemplates the springing of the earth, and with uplifted eye acknowledges the genial heat of the sun, doth acquaint himself with the knowledge, and operosely pursue the practice of his profession, no less than if he depended upon his own skill and handiwork alone. What would he think of some fervid, superstitious dreamer, who should come and challenge his ploughing and sowing and dressing, and call it impiety and independence upon God, and school him for taking the glory from Providence unto himself! This cant can be sung no where but in religion, where men are too much overawed to think.

In like manner, because we acknowledge the Spirit of God as the providence and procuration of our spiritual life, and give him the glory of all the fruits of holiness which we bear, are we therefore to abstract in any thing our study from the word of God, which contains the science, and from active holiness, which is the practice of our spiritual husbandry? and shall we be accused

by narrow-minded, inquisitorial heresy-hunters, because we urge the spirits of all flesh to study this heaven-bestowed manual, and to put its directions in practice all the day long? Which, verily, these unfeeling men would hide from the common eye of this world's suffering encampment, and preserve for the single entertainment of those who are already healed.

Therefore, at one and the same time must the truths of the Word be entertained in the mind's storehouse, and fed upon by the heart and the affections, and exhibited in a blameless walk and conversation; and the Spirit of God must be depended on and glorified for every step of our progress; for the truth while we read it; for the understanding to understand it; for the heart to feel it; for the courage to maintain it; and for the intrepidity and constancy to bring it forth.

More than this I declare myself incompetent to see; and they may blame me for what they choose, but I can no more. I cannot find in my heart to blemish that glorious and potential Word, which first the ministry of angels, and then the ministry of Christ, and then the ministry of the Holy Spirit, brought from heaven's sanctuary of truth to this necessitous and beguiled earth. I cannot find to cast mist and mystery upon its intelligible face, hesitation and dimness over the eye which looks on it. Read, read, and be instructed in all the offices of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Read, read, that your souls may live, and the gross

darkness which covers you may clear away, and your hearts may know their deceitfulness, and your feet find the path of life.

For the sake of those who find a difficulty in receiving this doctrine of the spiritual influence, we have set forth these explanations. We give them credit for rejecting the jejune and uninformed speculations, which, to make a place for the doctrine, must first put the eye and the soul out of the whole revelations of God, make them without intelligence, persuasion, or purpose; that afterwards they may magnify the office of the Spirit, in all at once taking off this veil, and making them legible and intelligible. This doctrine is not according to fact, for the word of God is of all books that which has produced the strongest influence upon the institutions of men, and which, perhaps, is the last book to lose its natural influence upon individual men. It doth not convert all men, because all men do not know, do not believe, do not keep in memory, do not abide in its truths; but its truths are not passive truths, but of the sharpest and most active virtue. They can be resisted, doubtless, and they require fair play within the soul, and call for an energy of study and contemplation; but no man was ever yet brought out of darkness into light, but by some of these revelations taking hold upon his mind, and working by a natural influence upon all his feelings and all his actions.

This depreciation of the Word into an unintel-

ligible legend, is not only against the fact of universal experience, but against the declarations of all Scripture, wherein the statutes, the commandments, the Word, the Son and the Spirit of God, are exalted with a mutual honour, and not one depreciated with the design of exalting another. But if there is one thing in Scripture more exalted than another, it is the Word, and that most wisely, because from it is the knowledge of all the rest, and of God himself. For lending a deaf ear to this most dangerous of all heresies, if we may use that cant term, we do give men credit; but if men thereupon would draw away from dependance upon God's Spirit, we hold them again, and pray them to consider, that because the Word is well fitted to enlighten the eyes of the blind and give understanding to the simple, its influence is nevertheless to be ascribed to the Spirit of God—in like manner as the fruits of the harvest, or the success of the mariner, and the general prosperity of life, are to be ascribed to the hand of God, though seemingly produced by no means but our own industry, skill, and carefulness. Nay more, though the Word has in it a constant virtue, and will have till the end of time, which virtue is only to be derived from it by a faithful perusal and persevering obedience; still, if we look not constantly to the Spirit of God for the increase, we shall never grow in religion, though in self-conceit and ingratitude we may grow—just in like manner as though the fertility reside in the elements of earth, water, air and heat, and may

never be extracted from them but by study to discover and industry to practise; still, if the labourer look not to the providence of God for all his increase, he will grow hard in his impiety and his ingratitude, but in devotion and godliness he will not grow.

Therefore while you read, and light begins to dawn, praise the Lord for his goodness, and be encouraged to go forward; conceive no vain gloryings, but glory in the Spirit of the Lord; and when the voice of conscience awaketh from its long slumber, give ear to its admonitions, and praise the Lord for his goodness. And when the sense of sin overwhelms you, still, in the overflowing floods, trust in him. And when the Saviour, all-glorious in his sufficient righteousness, discloseth himself to your view, rejoice and be exceeding glad, and praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his loving-kindness unto the children of men. And when at length you come to walk after the Spirit, and to have the witness of the Spirit that you are the sons of God, and to feel your calling and election becoming sure, then give thanks to God, and wait for the revelation of his sons, and the inheritance of the saints in light.

OF JUDGMENT TO COME.

PART IX.

THE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE ARGUMENT, WITH AN ENDEAVOUR TO BRING IT HOME TO THE SONS OF MEN.

THIS is no common argument in which we have been engaged, and that is no common conclusion which it hath had in view. It is no controversy with the opinions of an antagonist, whose undefended sides you might lay bare, and whose weapons you might turn against himself. You have no advantages from his unskilfulness or rashness, and you have no incitement from any personal interest in the struggle. But it is a question with all the doubts and objections of the hesitating mind. We stand to the post both of impugning and defending the great thesis of JUDGMENT TO COME,—a double capacity, which requires a double exercise of fairness and justice. We have first to excite the hesitations of the mind and afterward to allay them again; so that our ingenuity is doubly tasked, and we feel often in a divided state. For it hath been our wish to deal wisely between the reason of man and the revelation of God, steering wide of the coarseness and cruelty with which dogmatical theologians ride over the head of every natural feeling and reasonable thought of doubting men—remembering the

poverty of our own understanding, and attributing whatever we possess to the free and unmerited gift of God. To occupy this ground of mediating the matter in dispute between the reasoning power of man and the revelation of Almighty God, we may have given offence to both; to the one, for not having done its difficulties justice in the statement or the resolution; to the other, for having too daringly intermeddled and interfered with the secrecy and sacredness of its counsels. We are weak and feeble-minded like all men, and little acquainted with such high discourse, begirt also with manifold engagements, and invaded with the noise of this unresting place; and therefore we hope, from the sympathy of our fellow mortals, forgiveness for any injustice we have shown them; and we shall seek from the secret ear of our God that forgiveness for which he is to be feared, and that redemption for which he is to be sought after.

In casting our eye back over the eight preceding parts of our Argument, to review it all, we discern some passages in which we have spoken with liberty of men who still live under their Maker's good providence and within the reach of his tender mercy. Which we could easily expunge or now soften down, or make atonement for; but we will not, we cannot—For, our zeal towards God and the common good hath been stung almost into madness by the writings of reproachable men, who give the tone to the sentimental and the political world. Their poems, their criticisms and their blasphemous pamphlets,

have been like gall and wormwood to my spirit, and I have longed to summon into the field some arm of strength which might evaporate their vile and filthy speculation into the limbo of vanity, whence it came. For which office, gbein satisfied that nothing less than omnipotent truth under leading of Almighty God will suffice, I am weary of the vain infliction of pains and penalties by the ruling powers, which doth but aggravate the evil, by awakening sympathy in the bosom of all who dread that power should ever intermeddle with the free circulation of thought. Seeing that Truth, which I revere, thus wounded both by friends and foes, I could not rest, but have spoken out my feelings wherever occasion offered, at the risk of offending the workers of evil, and those who by brute power endeavour to counterwork them. I have done so, I say; not that I am equal to the task, or have executed the task, but in the hope of summoning from the host of the Lord of Hosts some one (surely I cannot be mistaken that there are some such!) able and willing to take the field in the fair conflict of truth, and cast back into these blaspheming throats their vain bravadoes against the armies of the living God. One such spirit would do us more good than all the prosecutions and suppressions which all the law-authorities of the realm can carry into effect.—But I fear the worst; that the intrigues of policy and the weight of power will in this age totally expel from the two established churches that vigour and virtue of mind from which such apolo-

gies can alone proceed. And sometimes I hope the best; that, through the Spirit of God working better understanding upon those powerful men, who at present outwit religion with their policies and strangle her with their power, the noble spirit which now lieth depressed in both, and especially depressed in this establishment of England, will be extricated, and the Newtons and Scotts, who still watch over her folds, will yet have wide sees to administer and provinces to watch over. Which renovation, alas! long lingereth, and the enemy taketh advantage of its tardiness. But if it linger much longer, I hope, ere this realm, which is faint at both extremes, grows sick at the heart and threatens to lay down its heavenly spirit of religion, some of those men who in our senates do both know and seek the Lord, will lift up their voice, and make the calamity of England's and Scotland's wasted parishes and faded provinces to be heard in the ears of those whom God hath appointed to rule them in righteousness and in holiness.—Or do they mean to wait until we fall into the condition of prostrate Ireland? No, that can never be; for, long ere then, the generous spirit of the South and the indignant spirit of the North will have eased them of those who trouble their prosperity.

Thus again I am betrayed by my feelings into these digressions for which I meant only to explain the cogent reasons. But let them all pass, and bring what good or ill the Lord may please,—

and let us quietly return to the review of what hath been said.

We seem to ourselves, allowing for these occasional digressions, to have kept with sufficient constancy to the matter of our discourse, and to have brought the subject to a good termination, arguing strictly according to the plan we chose and laid out at the beginning; and if we mistake not, we have kept generally within the sight and experience of common minds. All abstract discourse upon responsibility in general, and the freedom or necessity of the human will, we have avoided; not out of terror of that *maelstroom* in the ocean of thought, but because it is too nice a question to be handled by the way, and when it is taken up, should occupy the whole diligence of the mind. But instead of such metaphysical discourse, we entered upon the inductive and experimental inquiry, How the nature of man accorded with a state of responsibility, and discovered that in no one of its relationships was it found devoid thereof, but acceded to it with a constant choice, as the very buckler of its social existence. Thence we passed, to inquire what right God hath to lay the human race under control, and what is the character of that responsibility under which he hath actually placed them. His claim rests upon the whole structure and sustenance of our estate, and his intention is to multiply the nobleness and happiness of our being. For which end, he hath in his mercy granted to us a constitution of law

and government to live under; which we then passed on to peruse and consider.

Here there opened upon us a wide field of ethical and political discourse, into which we followed the train and leading of our argument. The largeness of divine law, compassing every province of purity, came under our review; the unmeasurable requirements of Christ's discipline, the unanswerable demands of his judgment, the inquisition of conscience, with the purer inquisition of God. These considering well, our mind was staggered not a little, and we applied ourselves to discover the profitableness and the fitness of an institution so incommensurate with the limited powers of man. Which application it pleased the Lord to reward to the satisfaction of ourselves, and we hope the profiting of others. For it did appear, that while the heart-searching pureness and divine simplicity of the institution answered, both to enlighten the eye of conscience and to awaken the enthusiasm of the heart after the heroism of holiness, the deficiencies and defalcations into which nature fell, were hindered from oppressing the heart with fear of judgment and horror of condemnation. It did appear, that the divine invocation which it sung over every good faculty, was like the songs of patriotism to an oppressed land, bringing forth the generous, the just and the good, from the neighbourhood of the base, the malicious and the wicked; making a noble insurrection within the breast for the old original condition of the soul: while the high abstrac-

tions of purity, to which every energy was summoned forth, did come to awaken and nourish that longing which there is in human nature to pass into the perfect, and return again into the embrace of an unfallen existence. And the inspection of conscience did make us supreme masters of ourselves, and elevate us into the cognizance of the Almighty's eye, abstracting us altogether from the watching of the laws and the customs and the authority of man; making every one a state within himself, better regulated of law and warded of police than the most free or the most despotic state upon the earth; laying not only the foundation, but completing the superstructure, of the good citizen, the good friend, the good relative, and the good man. Thus becoming satisfied upon the great purchase which such a spiritual institution takes upon the spirit of man to raise it to dignity and honour, we then gave ourselves to canvass the provision which it makes for our deficiencies, and to sound this question to the very bottom.

Thereto we made trial, in the opening of the Third Section, of various suggestions which nature presenteth from her own stores, and which men are wont to uphold as a sufficient account of this matter. These having tried upon principles of law, and exhibited their total inadequacy to any end, except to the end of making law and responsibility altogether void, we came to the great disclosure of Christ sacrificed for the sins of men. And here we wandered, well pleased, in

a glorious field which we had no leisure nor ability to disclose to others, though, we trust, God hath made it profitable to ourselves (alas! how little!) And we showed how this glorious revelation of the Gospel of peace takes a pleasant, powerful hold upon all our affections and all our interests, sustaining and promoting all the enthusiasm which the pure law hath awakened; how it feeds the lamp of knowledge with oil from heaven, and enlightens the whole house, and setteth all useful works on foot; how it awakens, how it cheers, how it presseth us forward. Ah! it is sweet to speculate upon these glorious themes! we are sorry it is drawing to a close; we could gladly renew all that hath been done—burn these papers, only to renew them again, but that the occupations of life are so many. Then, feeling within our souls an enthusiasm arise for God, we did invoke, as Elijah did of old, all the priests of Baal to the contest, and call upon them to kindle such a flame in the cold bosom of man, such an enthusiasm after holiness, as this which glowed beneath the feeding hand of God—which invocation of the Antichristian people we again repeat, praying them right early to lay down within compass their scheme for raising fallen man; and making him great and good; and we pledge ourselves to give it the same impartial trial of reason and understanding which we have given unto this.

Meanwhile, we doubt not our reader thought the wheels of our argument moved but slowly on to the great question of Judgment to Come. Ne-

vertheless we deemed it expedient to indulge our humour another turn; and for the purpose of bestirring the God-forgetting spirit of this age's policy, we adventured into the thorny path of man's political well-being, and endeavoured to study how this constitution tended to the remedy of its ills. And here, as before, we reaped the fruit of our labour, finding it to be the long-sought remedy of personal and political disorders, regenerating the sluggish and taming the fiery, and setting every subject of the realm into the position which is most easy to a good governor, and most terrible to a bad one; all which we proved by the induction of many cases, and by the ineffectual struggles which have been made and are making at social improvement, without this necessary implement of Religion. Oh! in this crisis of the world, when thrones are shaken, and nations are arising to the work of terrible revenge, and all things are unsettled, oh! thou Almighty ruler of the destinies of men, make the voice of truth to be heard by the raging people, and guide them into those measures which will ensure their success, and make Thy name glorious over the slavery and idolatry in which the nations are held.

Having thus justified the constitution to which God hath made man responsible, both as to its necessity, its wisdom, and its good effects, we then felt ourselves at liberty to lanch upon the great question of the Future Judgment. Yet cautiously and thoughtfully, as one who had the conviction of wakeful reason to win. Therefore, we

held a parley upon preliminaries, and gave her a fair field of objections, and fair liberty to complain. We took her doubts, her rights, her very prejudices into account, to allay which we had to entertain large discussion upon many profound questions, over which some may think a shadow of indistinctness still reigneth. Here it was that we began to feel the limitation of our powers. We had to forsake the realms of light, and carry the vision of our minds into the obscure of the middle state: we felt a light and a shadow upon our thoughts; they stood not constantly, they came by glimpses, and when we sought to write them down, they were gone. Whether, if thinking men should ever again be conditioned as the ancient sages were, meditating and musing like Pythagoras in the deep groves of Crotona, or like Plato, sending from the sacred promontory of Sunium his speculation abroad into boundless space, they might not by the new aids of revelation bring forth out of these unseen dwellings of the disembodied spirit some light of certain understanding, I do not know; but while thus they live and act under ten thousand invasions, buried in sensual gratifications, or floating amongst ambitious vanities and courting earthly distinctions, seeking chariots and horses, and costly abodes and delicious entertainment, it is vain to think that either poet or philosopher or divine will make any invasions upon these unredeemed provinces of thought, or even follow the flights which the more

pure and self-denied spirits of former ages have taken. There is one man in these realms, who hath addressed himself to such a godlike life, and dwelt alone amidst the grand and lovely scenes of nature, and the deep unfathomable secrecies of human thought. Would to heaven it were allowed to others to do likewise! And he hath been rewarded with many new cogitations of nature and of nature's God; and he hath heard in the stillness of his retreat, many new voices of his conscious spirit—all which he hath sung in harmonious numbers. But, mark the Epicurean soul of this degraded age! They have frowned on him; they have spit on him; they have grossly abused him. The masters of this critical generation (like generation, like masters!) have raised the hue and cry against him; the literary and sentimental world, which is their sounding-board, hath reverberated it; and every reptile who can retail an opinion in print, hath spread it, and given his reputation a shock, from which it is slowly but surely recovering.—All for what? For making Nature and his own bosom his home, and daring to sing of the simple but sublime truths which were revealed to him; for daring to be free in his manner of uttering genuine feeling and depicting natural beauty, and grafting thereon devout and solemn contemplations of God. Had he sent his Cottage Wanderer forth upon an 'Excursion' amongst courts and palaces, battle-fields, and scenes of faithless gallantry, his musings

would have been more welcome, being far deeper and tenderer than those of 'the heartless Childe;' but because the man hath valued virtue, and retiring modesty, and common household truth, over these the ephemeral decorations or excessive depravities of our condition, therefore he is hated and abused! All which I go aside to mention, in order to find for the cloudy indistinctness of those preliminary thoughts of Judgment, some apology in the active bustling spirit of this age, and especially of this my profession, of which every individual is in some measure the slave, and of which slavery I feel too much the influence. This life I feel to be neither an Apostolic nor a philosophic life. It hath in it no quietness, no retirement, no contemplation. It is driven on by duty. The spur of engagement ever galleth it. There is no free bounding of the mind along the high courses of thought. And a narrow style of opinions hath set in upon free thought, like a stream confined within bounds, which teareth up and delugeth the fertile plain. And a hot zeal for orthodoxy consumeth speculation up, or fretteth it into madness; and the canker hath eaten so deep into the judgments of men, that I question whether any one will regard these lamentations in any better light than the murmurs of a discontented, or the reveries of an unintelligible, mind; —therefore, lest in apologizing for mystery, I should double the crime, I hasten forward in the review of my argument, which had advanced

through the Preliminaries of Judgment to the Judgment itself.

In a subject so unbounded as the adjudication to all men of their proper allotments of praise and blame, of reward and punishment, the danger was, that imagination should keep no bound, or that enumeration should have no end. Against which evils to guard our discourse, we deemed it best to hold to some one description of the Judgment recorded in Scripture. Choosing for this end the description of our Lord in the 25th chapter of Matthew, we did our endeavour to open up the meaning of the tests there given, and apply them to the various cases of men. Simple as they were, we found them to contain the most perfect proofs of attachment to Christ, implying no less than an adherence to him and his interests in the face of the six great perils of human life, and a contentment for his sake to forego all gain and undergo all loss. We found also, that not only did it furnish a perfect test of attachment, but also a rule of universal application for the judging of ourselves. For, seeing the great spring of all our activity is to escape from these six evils, hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, forlornness and confinement; and to reach the six opposite goods, meat, drink, clothing, health, friends and liberty; we are ever called to account, upon the steps we have taken to make these fortunate passages, and we are reminded that the interests of Christ, or his least brother, are not

to suffer upon any account. If these interests be postponed to the other, then we prefer the good condition without Christ to the bad condition with him; we cast him off, because of the evil plight in which we find him, and into which he might happen to lead us. So that, though we should live in an age where there were neither Christian, orphans, sick, nor prisoners, we were as able to bring ourselves to the bar as if the church were again labouring under her six great disabilities; having only to observe the spirit in which we prosecuted the amendment of our worldly estate, whether in subservience to Christ or not. This principle of Judgment being developed, we then passed on to apply it to various conditions of men, that we might show how simple and efficient it is for the intended purpose. Here our subject properly concluded; but we thought it good to advert to two prejudices, one existing within, the other existing without, the church. The former presuming that orthodox faith, the latter that our worldly accomplishments, will carry a certain weight—the one view narrow, the other erroneous. For without faith in Christ, which is a belief of that he set himself forth to be, there can be no affection generated, and consequently no sacrifices made; but the affection being once evidenced by the sacrifices, there needeth no further inquiry into the faith, which then hath served all its use. As to worldly accomplishments, which have no relation to Christ, we abjured them utterly from Christian

judgment. They have their reward from men in time; but if a reward from God in eternity is wanted, it must be sought after his way, not after our own. Thus having opened up, applied, and justified the tests of acquittal and condemnation, we were in a state to pass on to the issues of Judgment.

In treating which, we endeavoured to keep from a coarse vulgar sensuality on the one hand, and a weak, refined sentiment on the other;—giving to heaven and hell some intelligible form, and some analogy with the present good and bad of human conditions. For almost all Christians, in their eagerness to keep the spirit of our faith free from Heathen and Mahomedan superstitions, have set forth nothing tangible upon the subject of future conditions. Their heaven is the heaven of a metaphysician or a devotee, not of a man; their hell a bugbear only to children. In our endeavour to give breadth of exposition to this subject, we kept as close as possible to the revelation, and sought merely to become its interpreters. Having drawn our sketches to the best of our ability, we then went at length into the question of their duration, resting it upon positive revelation, upon the analogies of the Christian system, upon the nature of God, and the nature of sin as known from experience;—and with this ended our argument of Judgment to Come, of which we came then to exhibit the Conclusion.

But, whereas it might fare to some readers to be excited by those terrible pictures which we were fain to draw, and to cry out, What shall we

do to be saved? we thought it would not be amiss to interpose an inquiry upon the way of escape from the wrath to come. Here we felt it needful to shake nature again out of her insecure refuges, before opening up the only city of refuge that holdeth good against the terrible day of the Lord, which is a life devoted to holiness, a new birth, and a spiritual life. To bring this style of living prominently forth, we took a distinction between spiritual life and the three ordinary states of natural life; life sensual, intellectual and moral; establishing from the very constitution of each, that all, save the first, were linked to the body, the world and human society; must dissolve with their dissolution; and have in them neither the intention of, nor provision for any thing beyond. Now, as it might happen to many a reader not to possess this spiritual life, we felt bound by an interest in their souls to open up its two great sources (two they are regarded, but they are only one), the Word and Spirit of God. Here we felt trammelled and confined by crude and insufficient notions popular in the churches; but we did not flinch from the utterance of the truth, as we believe it, for the salvation of souls. Not that we provoke controversy, but that we love truth, and wish to see the confused mind of the people set to rights upon the true source and origin of spiritual life. Having joined in harmony the Word and Spirit of God, to disunite which, is to deforce the power of both, we feel at liberty

again, and now proceed to wind up and conclude the whole.

Now then, let me draw this argument to a close, and cast myself, as it were sword in hand, on the strengths into which nature shuts herself up against all access of the thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity: but no! rather let me hold one other parley with the garrison, before I bring it to the desperate extremity of the forlorn hope.

Well then, once more hear me with a willing ear. Suppose our shores were visited, as have been those of a deeply injured land, visited every now and then by the transporting vessels of a remorseless, resistless enemy, who seized all arrived at a certain age, bound them hand and foot, had them to their boats, made sail, and were no more seen till they came for another cargo of human flesh. Our parents, our kindred, our friends, upon whom we hang, and in whose bosoms we are established by ties too fearfully strong, grow up around us, approach the changeful term of years, touch it, and are lanched off across the ocean, whither no eye can follow them, out of all reach of inquiry and of affection; the ears of the enemy being deaf to intercession as the ear of death, and their tongue mute to explanation as the voice of the grave. Thus suppose it to fare with any people, ties growing stronger to be the more cruelly rent asunder, ourselves at length to be parted from our dear homes and dearer chil-

dren. Thus abused, the people remain from year to year in deepest misery about their parted friends, in deepest grief over themselves, soon to be parted. Now conceive that some gallant brave one, upon the other side of the oft-navigated gulf, taking pity upon the poor people beyond, and upon the calamitous case to which they were brought, moved with a most adventurous spirit of love, should steal away by night, cut out a frail pinnace, night and day navigate the dread expanse, and after unheard of endurance, set upon our shores the only friendly foot that ever came from that quarter of the compass. He makes known whence he came, and upon what errand; we crowd down to the beach, he shows us tokens of our friends, and convinceth us he hath truly come from amongst them—he tells us they still live—he tells us the people die not on the other side the sea, but live for evermore—he tells us, that so soon as they arrive, they are mustered, and put to a certain proof—that those who stand the proof become the freemen, the masters, the rulers of the region, and bless the day they were forced out of places in which the image of happiness is never seen, into a place where its true form and balmy essence never forsake them. He tells, on the other hand, that those who stood not the proof were made thralls of, slaves, basest bondsmen, to be tasked, and driven without mercy and without hope, aye enduring, and aye able to endure, aye grieving, and never hopeful of deliverance. What, what is that most fearful proof upon which hang-

eth such diversity of fate? tell us, tell us quickly, they would all exclaim. Then he opens his mouth, and reveals the mighty truth, that there is no chance of delivering them from transportation, that there is no chance of altering the laws upon the other side, that all he can do is to bring them intelligence, and put it in their power to pass the fiery trial. They all exclaim again—What is that terrible trial upon which destiny hangs? He puts his hand to his bosom, and he takes from it a book, and he delivers that book to the people, and calls it the Testament to them in his blood. And having done so, he drops down dead of his fatigue and endurance upon their account. Describe to me the agony of gratitude, and admiration, and grief, in the bosoms of that highly-favoured nation. But they have not time to indulge their deeply-moved feelings. Another fatal shipment may be instantly called for, they sit down to the far-borne book, to embalm it in their memory. They find, to their happiness, that it is plain, and level to every capacity; that it hangs the fatal test upon neither rank, riches, nor talents, but upon qualities which all, by discipline, may easily acquire; that it describes in terms most joyful the admitted, in terms most doleful the rejected—but opens a passage to all. And finally they discover, that he who bore it was no less than the King's only and honoured Son, and that they shall meet him upon the other side, where he is taking order for their reception. Now is the grief of that dark and afflicted people

turned into joy—their mourning into singing; they are all bustle and all activity to get ready: they study the book, they seek the qualifications, they teach it to their children, they disperse it far and wide throughout the land, and the heart of the land is made glad. And in all these songs of gladness they sing of him who came to save them with a great deliverance.

Such a shipment of souls is going on amongst us, and, to make it more frightful, not at stated, but uncertain seasons—not at one age, but at every age. Such a messenger has come—such a mystery he has disclosed—such an eternal diversity of fates he hath taught—such a writing of the needful outfit he hath left and spread abroad, making the high places of the region patent to men of every kindred and every tongue. Hath it stirred within us a spirit of inquiry and emotion? Hath it relieved us from a state of agony and suspense? Have our ears drunk in the intelligences? Hath our eye conned the far-borne volume? Have we been busy providing the needful passport? Are we standing on tip-toe expectation of release? Is his name who bore it dear as its salvation upon our souls? Is he acknowledged in all our hopes, beloved in all our loves, and desired in all our desires of the glorious things which he brought to light? Or do we remain listless and inactive, hastening not our preparation; dreaming over fancies of our own, or listening to the speculations of every man as ignorant as ourselves; returning no thanks to our gallant messenger, and making no

account of the message he hath brought?—Oh how infatuated!

Seeing we have all to pass through the same ordeal of death which our Saviour passed, and to explore the unknown land beyond it, from which he alone returned, it behoves us to apply to him for advice upon the best outfit for the journey. He alone doth know, for he alone hath seen. Our own fancies are dubious, and may prove as wide of the truth when we awaken upon the long day of eternity, as our visions upon our pillow do seem in the morning. Neither let us be directed by the fancies of other men, who see no further beyond death than we do. The land is a new land, to the nature of which you and I and all men are strangers. It lies, like a wide dark ocean, spread around the little island of life whereon we sojourn. A dark impenetrable curtain shrouds us in, of which the sight is fearful, and the neighbourhood appalling. All men are moving towards this dark verge with ceaseless and anxious motion: and sometimes it will approach, and shroud up multitudes prematurely in its invisible womb—and all trace of them is for ever gone: it flits and shifts before us with fearful incertitude, and no man laying himself down at night is sure that he will rise again in the morning among his friends and in his native land. But though it shift awhile, this gloomy bourn of our pilgrimage hath an unshifting limit, behind which it never recedes. And soon the extreme angle of that limit is reached by all. On we move in endless succession, helpless as the

sheep to the slaughter; and the moment we touch the dark confine, we disappear, and all clue of us is lost. You may cry aloud, but we hear and answer not; you may give us any signal, but we see and return it not. No voice cometh from within the curtain; all there is silent and unknown. How it fares with them, whether they merge at once into another country, whether they are out at sea, by what compass and map they steer, or whether they are lost in that gulf and abyss of being for evermore—no man for thousands and thousands of years had the shadow of an imagination. It was very mysterious; each man as he passed 'shuffled off his mortal coil,' left us his slough, but nothing of himself. His reason, his feeling, his society, his love, all went with him: here with us was left all of him that we were wont to see, and touch, and handle. How he could exist apart from these, the helps and instruments of beings, was all a phantom and a dream. The existence, if existence there was, no human faculties could fix a thought upon. His spirit, if spirit there were, takes its fate in cold nakedness; but how it dwells, or feels, or suffers, or enjoys, when thus divested, was altogether incomprehensible. Why then, in this midnight ignorance, should we apply to any man to guide us, or to ourselves? it is vanity. Quit, then, with such presumptuous trust, and be not duped with their blind directions.

Only one man, of the myriads who passed the darksome veil, returned; he passed into the obscure, in the obscure he tarried, and like the rest

was given up for lost. But forth he came in the greatness of his strength, having conquered the powers beyond. He came not for his own sake, but for ours; to give us note and warning of what was doing upon the other side, and of what fare we were to expect for ever. And he hath laid down the simplest rules to guide us to happiness and honour, and the amplest warning to keep us from degradation and ruin. In the name of reason and consistency, then, to whom should we apply but unto him who knows so well, and was never known, in all he said, to deceive—in all he did, to injure. To him, then, let us go for tuition. And most surely, he is the kindest, most affectionate, most considerate Teacher that ever breathed the breath of knowledge over helpless ignorance. Away then with our own conjectures, away with the conjectures of other men, however wise in this life! they know nothing of the life within the veil which shrouds us in. Up then, go to the Scriptures, which he uttered of himself, or by the inspiration of his Spirit; there let us be stripped of all our fancied knowledge of things which we know not in the least. Under them let us commence a new childhood, a new scholarship for eternity, and we shall arrive at length at that manhood of strength and knowledge, which will never fall away into the dotage or searness of age, and shall survive death, and convey us safe through the unknown to the mansion of our heavenly Father, which our great forerunner hath gone to prepare for our reception.

I do remember, some few years ago, to have been resident in the chief commercial city of Scotland, at a time when many of our people were proposing, from stress of times, to emigrate to the Western world. A year had to run before they were called on to embark, but already they were busy in preparations for their removal. Their thoughts were turned upon the distant land; they questioned you upon its productions, they circulated the letters which were received from it, they sought books that treated of it, they drew out the regulations of their little colony, disposed of all their effects which would cease to be of use, and replaced them with others that would be serviceable to their new residence and way of life. But what preparation doth man make beforehand for the last and eternal emigration from his earthly home; what outfit for the dreary and perilous passage; what disposal of time's commodities and time's concerns; and what new store of those spiritual qualities which are needed in the country that lieth beyond the waters of death? How cruel to lanch the immortal spirit into eternity without deliberation and without resources, when ample stores of both are laid out in the word of God! How weak and unresolved, to put all preparation off till the body is breaking up, and the soul trembling on the wing for she knows not whither! How mad, to brave the King of the region, the Judge and Arbiter of the conditions of disembodied souls, to leave his epistles unopened, his royal overtures of grace unheeded! How pitiful, to be occupied to the last, to the very last gasp, with the things we are

leaving behind, which can profit or injure us no more, and are fast fading into unreclaimed annihilation!

If death, like the time of removal to a new dwelling place, or the day of embarkation for a foreign shore, were dated, and could by no means anticipate its fixed term, there might be reason for staving off the preparation for Judgment to a distant day, space being left for all needful arrangement; but coming, as it often doth, like a watch of the night, and like a thief in the night invading our slumbering, our defenceless homes, it is the height of folly and of rashness thus to live undefended and unprepared. I mistake, we are defended, but we are not prepared; yes, we are defended: that is, the physician and the surgeon pitch their tents hard by, and at the first onset of Death's forerunners they are called to our side to put in their defences against the king of terrors. They put their defences in, but what do they avail? To mitigate racking pain, or by a sleepy dose to make the passage more tranquil; or, if God hath intended but a warning, not a summons, then they are his instruments to bring convalescence round. But to stay the dart of Death, when commission from on high hath been given him to strike, they pretend no more than they do to call the spirit back to the pale clay after they have been struck with his dart asunder. Ah! it grieves me to see men live so undefended and unprepared. For what availeth the preparation of a death-bed? Nothing, or next to nothing. Protestant priests have not, like Catholic priests, power given them

to discharge a man's conscience with a word, or ceremonious masses, and send the stained soul, pure and spotless, to meet its Maker. This is only yielded to the successors of St. Peter. Oh, such villany, such villany they do play upon the dying man, and upon the living, thus, thus to cajole them out of life's busy healthy day with the delusion of the last moment's well-acted scene. Would you be so duped by any priest of them all? I know you would not. No, you would not allow yourselves to be another's dupe; but you care not to become your own. Your own hands will do for your souls the evil thing which you will not suffer another to do. You will do the fatal deed of self-murder. For I solemnly aver, that it is as much opposed to sober reason thus to postpone repentance to a sick bed's hopeless closing scene, and to trust salvation to a Protestant pastor's prayer in the latest hour of gathering darkness, as to give all over to the elevation of the holy chalice and the swallowing of the consecrated wafer.

Will you hear me one moment upon that which repentance is, and thence discover how inadequate thereto is a death-bed's disabled state. Repentance is not the resolution to amend, which resolution every one makes almost every time he suffereth for sin, and breaks as often. If this be the repentance that needeth not to be repented of, but will carry you clear through the Judgment into heaven, then you have made it fifty times, aye a thousand times, every time you had compunctious visitings of conscience, painful after-

thoughts, or calamitous consequences of sin. This is not the repentance that either God or man doth care for. Repentance is that from which commenceth a change of life. It is the turning point of character and conduct, which reverses and afflictions, and sin's twanging consequences, may suggest, but never of themselves can bring about. The resolution is one thing, the power to carry into effect is another. I may resolve to be rich, but am I therefore rich? and will my bills upon the credit of that resolution pass upon the Exchange? I may resolve to be learned, but am I therefore learned? or will the Senate of the University grant me academic honours upon the credit of my resolution? I resolve to be good; am I therefore good, or will God pass me at the judgment-seat? How wise men take pleasure to deceive themselves for the sake of a little temporal indulgence!

The resolution is to be commended, but not to be trusted one time in a thousand. For man cannot effect a change upon the spur of resolution, which is the high faculty of God alone. Yet the resolution is good, and ought to be encouraged. But if the resolution would succeed, we must go to work and take the proper means for bringing the change about. We must slacken hold of that world which hath led us such a heavy rueful road; and take hold of something which may carry us into a better drift. The world, as nature looketh on it, is a deluder, a charmer; and will carry us deeper and deeper into its labyrinth. It filleth the soul brim full of false, ambitious, fallacious estimates, delusory

wishes, dreams and phantasies of good and happiness. From her the natural man taketh in nothing but poison to his spiritual faculties, and alienation from his God. If, therefore, a change is to ensue upon resolution, courses must be taken for evacuating from the heart these evil and delusory things of which it is the continent. For if the heart continue primed with its antient charge, what alteration under Heaven can there be of life

Whence, then, is the heart to be charged with new and better contents? Not from the world. Whence then? from the word of God? This is the new world out of which the soul is to suck a new nature, and be conformed unto a new image. Here she will see things in new lights. Hence derive new apprehensions of God, new estimates of human things; heavenly ambitions and earthly contempts, sincere affections, true interests, solid comforts, stable principles, unflitting hopes, and abiding joys. These new tenants of the heart, as they enter through the knowledge and belief of the word of God, will expel the old ones, and a change of life will grow apace; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, and whatever else defiles the life of man; and, till the heart be discharged and cleansed of this foul adulterous load of nature's and the world's engendering, and possessed with another load engendered by the Word and Spirit of God, it is vain, very vain to think that any reformation or alteration of life will ensue.

How then, if these principles stand true, and that they do, all reason, revelation, and common experience of man do testify, how can any son of man commit the work of repentance to the desolate and soul-dissolving hour of death? What time then is there for the implantation of new principles—what strength for the ejecting of old ones—what room for experimenting upon the change—what solacement of assured hope to any clear-eyed spirit—what scope for the office of a pastor—what occupation for any soul? The communings between such a soul and a faithful pastor are the very shadow of weakness; the frailest, idlest, most unprofitable meeting which can take place on earth, a mere mockery of religion, and pregnant with most delusive effects. The pastor hath plenty of good things to bestow, but the dying man hath not a faculty of soul disengaged to take them up, nor hath he room wherein to bestow them. He is dying, loaded, as he lived, with earthly cares. The pastor is a mere tool of ceremony by his bed-side; the most useless, the most helpless of all who minister to his wants, because, to speak the very truth, he hath no wants to which it is his province to minister.

But when it otherwise happeneth that the fear of God had made an early lodgment in the breast, and kept its place against the temptations of this world and the impressions of nature within; that the hand of God hath been seen and gratefully acknowledged through the whole of life; that the weight of sins hath led the soul to the Cross of

Christ, and unburdened it there; and that the worship of God hath been publicly pursued, and his favour privately besought, and his works, to the extent of our understanding and the ability of our mind, followed after; then, then the pastor's office to minister at his death-bed is an office full of meaning, and full of heart-felt gladness, to the spiritual patient most enlivening, and to all around most affecting. Such a death-bed hath no terror; and it is well nigh cheated of its grief, at least it hath a chastened grief. It is like the refining furnace to the gold, where the dross alone is left; the refreshing of spring when the creature casts its viler slough; or the apotheosis of an antient hero, when his spirit riseth before his kindred from its earthly nook into the neighbourhood of God.

Ah, then, why do men dream! and why doat they upon this final repentance which is so impracticable! Why put they off the present thought of death, under the delusion of taking it up at a more convenient season! Do be entreated, for the sake of all that is dear to man in time and in eternity, to take the matter up at present. Send those thoughts, which roam sportive over gay fields of delusion; send those active, manly purposes, which now combat the hard and perilous conditions of human life; send those fond hopes, which dwell over the troublous future of the present life—hopes of a good which shineth faintly, and in the end defeat, like the ignis-fatuus, the pursuits of most; send those fears,

which dwell over the troublous future of the present life—fears of loss, of poverty, of disgrace, of worldly defamation, or worldly despite; send them all, I do pray you, by heaven's glorious scenes and hell's awful bereavements, send all those joyful thoughts and manly purposes, and fond hopes and gloomy fears into the word of God, that they may partake there a proper, real, and everlasting nutriment, which may build up the edification of the soul, and secure for ever her well-being beyond the power of death and the grave, and sin, and the father of sin, to do her harm.

This 'procrastination is the thief of time;' this postponement of repentance, is the kidnapper of souls, and the recruiting-officer of hell. And I well do know what a troop of generous men he hath deluded; men who know the truth, and revere the truth, but postpone it under the incantation and magic of this great enemy of heaven. Mine is an impotent position from which to assault an enemy that is possessed of your bosoms; but if I could arouse your better faculties, which his potations have laid asleep, and draw them to take a refreshing draught from the wine and milk of the gospel of Christ, then I glory to think how they would clear the inward temple of this sacrilegious intruder, and send him and his herd to the kennel, whence they issued to dupe the soul of man and bereave him of his noble enjoyment. Oh! would you compose yourselves to thought; would you still the tu-

multuous host of passions and affections within, escape to a secret place from the din without, sit you down to think of life and death, and judgment and eternity, there would come up such still, small voices from the depths within, such stifled thoughts of God would awaken and present themselves at the court of conscience once more, strangled affections to Christ would breathe again through the living Spirit of our God, tender promises of Scripture would quicken long-departed hope; and the gospel of our Saviour would banish dissuading fears, and the heart would open its stony doors to God, as the flowers do their folded bosom to the beams of the sun. And oh! what new purposes would grow from the divine communion, and what new courses would be followed by the grace of our God! And what freshness, what health, what joyfulness, would enliven our diseased and sickened soul! The bridegroom hath blessed her with his love, and united himself to her for ever. Life, for the first time, beginneth; and, like Christ, the father of it, it ariseth from a tomb—the tomb of the old man crucified. Then the seed of the Word that liveth and abideth for ever is implanted; the fruits of the Spirit come forth from the bed of carnal nature, and the spiritual man standeth ready to be glorified by death. Such, be assured, my beloved brethren, will come to every one of you, if you will but shake off, in the strength of God, this nightmare of procrastina-

tion, which weigheth down your bosom, and will speedily consume your life.

Thus is one strength demolished, into which indolent nature retreateth, and where she liveth upon time, as the sloth does upon the tree, till every particle of the food is consumed, then droppeth, she knows not whither. There is another strength into which she casts herself when beaten out of this, upon which I meditate no parley, no tedious operation of argument, but a main attack, a storm, where it shall be fought hand to hand, without any reserve or any mercy upon either side. For they are desperadoes with whom I am now to deal, if so be that our former mild and reasoning methods of discourse have failed to move them.

There be those who confound the foresight of death with a fearfulness of death, and talk of meeting death like brave men; and there be institutions in human society which seem made on purpose to hinder the thoughts of death from coming timeously before the deliberation of the mind. And they who die in war, be they ever so dissipated, abandoned and wretched, have oft a halo of everlasting glory arrayed by poetry and music around their heads; and the forlorn hope of any enterprise goeth to their terrible post amidst the applauding shouts of all their comrades. And 'to die game,' is a brutal form of speech which they are now proud to apply to men. And our prize-fights, where they go plung-

ing upon the edge of eternity, and often plunge through, are applauded by tens of thousands, just in proportion as the bull-dog quality of the human creature carries it over every other. And to run hair-breadth escapes, to graze the grass that skirts the grave, and escape the yawning pit, the impious, daring wretches call cheating the devil; and the watch-word of your dissolute, debauched people is, 'A short life and a merry one.' All which tribes of reckless, godless people lift loud the laugh against the saints, as a sickly, timorous crew, who have no upright gait in life, but are always cringing under apprehensions of death and the devil. And these bravos think they play the man in spurning God and his concerns away from their places; that there would be no chivalry, nor gallantry, nor battle-brunt in the temper of man, were he to stand in awe of the sequel which followeth death. And thus the devil hath built up a strong embattled tower, from which he lordeth it over the spirits of many men, winning them over to himself, playing them off for his sport, in utter darkness all their life long, till in the end they take a leap in the dark, and plunge into his yawning pit, never, never to rise again.

I would try these flush and flashy spirits with their own weapons, and play a little with them at their own game. They do but prate about their exploits at fighting, drinking, and death-despising. I can tell them of those who fought with savage beasts; yea, of maidens

who durst enter as coolly as a modern bully into the ring, to take their chance with infuriated beasts of prey; and I can tell them of those who drank the molten lead as cheerfully as they do the juice of the grape, and handled the red fire, and played with the bickering flames as gaily as they do with love's dimples or woman's amorous tresses. And what do they talk of war? Have they forgot Cromwell's iron band, who made their chivalry to skip? or the Scots Cameronians, who seven times, with their Christian chief, received the thanks of Marlborough, that first of English captains? or Gustavus of the North, whose camp sung psalms in every tent? It is not so long, that they should forget Nelson's Methodists, who were the most trusted of that hero's crew. Poor men, they know nothing who do not know out of their country's history, who it was that set at nought the wilfulness of Henry VIII. and the sharp rage of the virgin Queen against liberty, and bore the black cruelty of her popish sister; and presented the petition of rights, and the bill of rights, and the claim of rights. Was it chivalry? was it blind bravery? No; these second-rate qualities may do for a pitched field, or a fenced ring; but when it comes to death or liberty, death or virtue, death or religion, they wax dubious, generally bow their necks under hardship, or turn their backs for a bait of honour, or a mess of solid and substantial meat. This chivalry and brutal bravery can

fight if you feed them well and bribe them well, or set them well on edge; but in the midst of hunger and nakedness, and want and persecution, in the day of a country's direst need, they are cowardly, treacherous, and of no avail.

Oh! these topers, these gamesters, these idle revellers, these hardened death-despisers! they are a nation's disgrace, a nation's downfal. They devour the seed of virtue in the land; they feed on virginity, and modesty, and truth. They grow great in crime, and hold a hot war with the men of peace. They sink themselves in debt; they cover their families with disgrace; they are their country's shame. And will they talk about being their country's crown, and her rock of defence? They have in them a courage of a kind such as Catiline and his conspirators had. They will plunge in blood for crowns and gaudy honours; or, like the bolder animals, they will set on with brutal courage, and, like all animals, they will lift up an arm of defence against those who do them harm. But their soul is consumed with wantonness, and their steadfast principles are dethroned by error; their very frames, their bones and sinews, are effeminated and degraded by vice and dissolute indulgencies.

If there is no bravery in meeting an enemy whose power and virulence we know not, and if there is no cowardice in examining an enemy's strength, that we may take precautions to meet him with success, then have these bravoes no credit for valour in overlooking death, and we have

no discredit for calmly preparing to receive him: for they know not that which they affect to despise, and therefore they have no credit in despising it; while we do know, and are alone entitled to the praise of being resolute men. A blind man hath no credit from running risks, for he sees not the danger that is before him; and if he should come upon his enemy's ground, there is no courage in that, for he knoweth not that he is there; and if, while his enemy is taking measures to trammel him and cut him off, he preserve his resolution and show no signs of alarm, there is no heroism in that, for he knoweth not what is hastening to befal him. No higher do I rate the resolution of those men who make a mock of death, because they are generally as ignorant of its consequences as a blind man is of the perils in his way. They know no more of it than the parting of the breath and the entombing of the lifeless clay. They look no further with a steady eye. Judgment they never bring their conscience to face. The holiness and justice of God they deal not with at all; they blink the whole question of eternity. Where, then, is their courage? Doth it lie in winking hard, like a child when it is afraid? Does it lie in hiding the head in a bush, as they say the ostrich doth when he finds he cannot escape his pursuers? Let them open their eyes to the truth, the whole truth, and then put their courage to the proof. One who believes that death is an eternal sleep, or that the next world will at least be better than the present, or that

God will wipe all transgressions into oblivion, and that his judgment will be a universal act of indemnity, a general gaol delivery—what hinders him to die calm and brave! And what praise or credit would he claim? He must indeed be a craven who cannot face the pain of dying. Pain is doubtless an excessive evil, and not to be courted; but if to bear patiently the pain of dying be the great feat upon which these boasters plume themselves, they have indeed a large conceit; for it is a courage which the commonest, meanest, weakest possess, in equal perfection with themselves. The coolness, the gaiety of all such men in the hour of death, is like the coolness and gaiety of soldiers when they are marching, not against the battle, but into the ambush, of the enemy. They know not what is before them and around them; the country seemeth clear; and to be afraid would be the extreme of cowardice; they cheerfully pursue their way, they gaily jest and talk, they move on unconcerned as cattle to the slaughter-house, and for the same reason they are unconcerned, because they know not what is before them: but the moment arrives, the signal is given, the ambuscade opens its arms of death around them. Now let them shew their valour, for hitherto they have shewed none. So say I to these self-blinded boasters. Give ear to the true character of death, to the whole scope of its consequences, to the certainty of its issues; take into your minds the after thoughts, the dreams, the awakening consternation, the resurrection

morn, the fearful judgment, the whole compass of a Christian's eternity, and then draw yourself into comparison with a Christian in the matter of facing death!

Oh! it sickens the grave spirit of a man, to see how these swaggering bragadocios, who have slain immortality within their breast, bereaved their nature of its spiritual and eternal part, and brought themselves to the nature of the animal or merely intellectual man, exult in their degradation, make a merit of their loss, and pride themselves in their shame. The thoughtless, godless generation have evacuated God from their hearts, and they have filled them with sensual possessors; or, making the faculties of reason their only guide, they have not sought after the recreation of the spiritual man within—they have cut off commerce with the other world—it hath faded into a thin vision, or been rejected as a fabled mystery; and being so despoiled of all that should have been the food of serious meditation over death, and grave preparation for its arrival, the men think themselves great for wanting that meditation and carefulness whereof they have not the materials within them, nor cannot have, save by a regeneration of nature, and a resurrection of the hopes and fears of the world to come. And *they* will take into their profane lips to judge the children of God, whom they can no more understand, being destitute of spiritual life, than the lower animals can understand our reasoning nature, or take upon them to judge our reasonable procedure! It doth appear to me

that the tiger who plungeth on with bare breast and unarmed claws upon surrounding deaths, hath as good title to call the soldier coward, who casts a shield before his heart, and arms his right hand with steel, and clothes his mind with circumspection in the hour of danger, as the sensual or even intellectual man hath to judge the spiritual man of God and call him coward, because in the hour of his need he puts on the breast-plate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, and the helmit of salvation, and, with the circumspection of prayer and the word of God, struggles with the great adversary of the life of man.

Besides, for I have set myself in the strength of God to fight his battle with the ungodly generation, these men, who thus intrench themselves in a boasted fearlessness of death, do, it seems to me, derive that courage which they boast of, not only from their ignorance of the enemy's strength, but also from certain artificial stimulants with which they treat their souls, as weak-hearted soldiers do upon the eve of battle; or as the Malays, who, when they have staked and lost their all at play, do intoxicate themselves with opium, and then rush with creiss in hand into the streets, running a-muck, and dealing death around, until some hand arrest their deadly course. For the spirit can be intoxicated and made unfit for deliberative judgment by as many methods as the body can. Life may be made so miserable as to make death seem, to people in their state of ignorance, the least of two evils, and the better choice upon the whole;

or rage may rise to such a pitch as to make a man flee with headlong fury upon death, or shame and disgrace may prompt him from behind, or ambition and glory may intoxicate him, or revenge may make him furious: in all which cases his soul is not master of itself, and the action is not to be taken in proof of cool deliberative contempt of death. And for those who make light of it at a distance, they will be found generally to have a dash of the braggart in their character, to the score of which it may be set down. Wait till it draw nigh, and watch them as its hour approacheth, and observe how their courage stands the proof.

Perhaps the best way of making this experiment is to look upon the last hours of the condemned. There are no practical despisers of death like those who touch, and taste and handle death daily, by daily committing capital offences. They make a jest of death: all its forms, and all its terrors, are in their mouths a scorn. Now it hath been my lot to attend on the condemned cells of prisoners, and to note the effects when they were kept cool in body and in mind, and saw that enemy at hand whom they affected to despise when at a distance. And in the North we have a better opportunity of making this painful observation, seeing weeks, not days, intervene between sentence and execution. Now this is the fact: that, first of all, death in sight hath such a terrible aspect, that they make every effort to escape him. If there be one ray of hope, it is

entertained with the whole soul. All friends are importuned; every channel of interest beset; and a reprieve is besought by every argument and intreaty. Some have lived such a life of enormity, and are enveloped in such a cloud of brutal ignorance, that they die without care, and run the risk of another world, if there be one. But this is not frequent. The greater number abandon their untenable position of hardihood, and seek a shelter when the terrible storm hurtleth in the heavens, and they see its dismal preparation. I know how it is, for I have watched all the night and all the morning in their cells, and walked with them to the drop; and one only I have found whose heart would not yield: and when I took his hand, it was cold and clammy, and ever and anon there shot a shiver through his frame, and again resolution braced him up, and again the convulsive throb of nature shot thrilling to the extremities, which testified the strife of nature within.

Ah! brave not death, or he will take vengeance when he cometh. When the Lord delivereth you into his hands, he will rush upon you with revenge for all the affronts you have given him. These are no vain tales which are told of the very proud and the extremely wicked—how they die in terrible moods: for God hath the design of thereby demonstrating to the world how weak men are at their best, and how proudest men are most abased. He intendeth, before they leave the earth, to defeat in the eyes of men, or in their ears to contra-

dict all the blasphemy which these sons of Belial have uttered; therefore he sent Nebuchadnezzar before he died to herd with the cattle of the field; therefore he smote Herod with worms in the hour of his highest pride; and therefore he hath given many persecutors of his church so hard a passage from this world into the next.

If so be that it is the cloud of ignorance which hindereth your sight of God's truth, and deadeneth the admonitions of conscience within the breast, then indeed you well may die unconscious, as you lived unconscious, and judgment will go, in that case, against you, because you opened not your ear to instruction; but if in the time past, and at this time, ye be suppressing the voice of conscience and the admonitions of God, and with your eyes open plunging deeper and deeper into sin, then there is every likelihood that conscience will awake on a death-bed, and outwardly or inwardly torture you before you depart.

For, see you not that former pleasures have taken wing, and former strength; that joy hath dissolved her court, and dispersed her train; that silence reigns without, and the premonitions of death speak within; and long, long nights of wakefulness have to pass, and days of gloom to drag on their weary course; and enjoyment being deceived, and anticipation shrinking back, there is nothing but the past over which the mind can brood? Each event comes arrayed in responsibility, and each scruple of conscience becomes a leaden weight upon our breasts; and each twang of re-

morse becomes a sticking, cleaving enemy, and the sick man cannot shake them off by joyful company or cheerful converse, or stimulating pleasures. He lieth within his curtained tent—his eye rolleth over its murky sides—he would shake the thoughts away, but they cling like vultures upon his breast, and he lieth at their mercy, till, stung to madness, he can no longer refrain. Then he lifteth up his voice in self-condemnation, and cleaveth the common ear with the tale of his evil deeds, and the pride of surrounding relatives cannot restrain him; but he holds on unsparingly, to clear his breast of its tormentors. And he remits to recover strength, and resumes in all the bitterness of a man possessed; and calls his children to his bed-side, and imprecates on their heads direful curses if they travel in their father's footsteps. Then turns upon his bed, and enjoys the momentary calm of a disburdened conscience, and in anguish expires!

And another, of a more dark and dauntless mood, who hath braved a thousand terrors, will also make a stand against terrors' grisly king. And he will seek his antient intrepidity, and search for his wonted indifference; and light smiles upon his ghastly visage, and affect levity with his palsied tongue, and parry his rising fears, and wear smoothness in his outward heart, while there is nothing but tossing and uproar beneath. He may expire in the terrible struggle,—nature may fail under the unnatural contest; then he dies with desperation imprinted on his clay!

But if he succeed in keeping the first onset down, then mark how a second and a third comes on, as he waxeth feebler. Nature no longer enduring so much, strange and incoherent words burst forth, with now and then a sentence of stern and loud defiance. This escape perceiving, he will gather up his strength, and laugh it off as reverie. And then remark him in his sleep: how his countenance suffereth change, and his breast swelleth like the deep; and his hands grasp for a hold, as if his soul were drowning; and his lips tremble and mutter, and his breath comes in sighs, or stays with long suppression, like the gusts which precede the bursting storm; and his frame shudders and shakes the couch on which this awful scene of death is transacted. Ah! these are the ebbings and flowings of strong resolve and strong remorse. That might have been a noble man; but he rejected all and chose wickedness, in the face of strong visitings of God, and therefore he is now so severely holden of death.

And reason doth often resign her seat at the latter end of these God-despisers. Then the eye looks forth from its naked socket, ghastly and wild; terror sits enthroned upon the pale brow; he starts—he thinks that the fiends of hell are already upon him; his disordered brain gives them form and fearful shape; he speaks them—he craves their mercy. His tender relatives beseech him to be silent, and with words of comfort assuage his terror, and recal him from his paroxysm of remorse. A calm succeeds, until dis-

ordered imagination hath recruited strength for a fresh creation of terror; and he dies, with a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation to consume him!

These cases are not ideal, though they be extreme; in mercy to surrounding and surviving relatives, God suffereth it not often. But though outward demonstration be carefully shrouded up, I greatly err if inward tumult and tossing of the mind be rare: I am assured it is not rare; else why send for the spiritual opiate of a priest, and why seek the requiem of a prayer? why call for the extreme unction of the body and blood of Christ? I know that in many cases a man withereth like a tree, and in his old age is desolate of thought; he buds no more with promise and expectation; he is not pregnant with feeling; words kindle no fire in him, thoughts awake no kindred thoughts. And alas! this is perhaps the most pitiable case of all. The former bespoke a wounded heart; this bespeaks a heart ossified and unimpressible: reason remains, contentment remains; but, alas! feeling is dead. The spiritual man breathes no longer, but hath given up the ghost under the several neglects and wounds which he hath received. The animal life may still be strong, and the rational and intellectual man may be in active exertion; but yet the power of spiritual action be altogether lost. You cannot raise a spark of conviction, or kindle towards the Deity one flash of love. The whole faculties are occupied, and

the old possessors will not give place; old trains of thought will not be invaded; old habits will not be disturbed; the conscience is seared as with a red-hot iron. Ah, how helpless you feel at the death-bed of such a man! You see an immortal spirit going into the world unregenerate. You would speak to him, but you know not how to begin. You do speak to him, and you find him intrenched in his decencies, his moralities, his charities. You cannot blast his hopes, though you know them to be hopeless; for there remaineth no chance of conviction. It would be only vexing him in vain, adding inward tribulation to outward trouble. Every thing is against interference, and you are fain to see him drown, without the power to reach him help!

Therefore, ye sons of men, despise not death; neither dismiss the thoughts of death; otherwise one form of this disease, the acute or the chronic, will at length possess your soul. It is vain to make bravadoes, or to put on hardihood against an enemy who striketh through the strength of princes, and overturneth the most settled and established bulwarks of power. Neither listen to the bravadoes of other men; but place them to the score of their ignorance or their folly. Withdraw from those who make a mock of death, or gainsay them; but do not yield to their ignorant and wanton blasphemy. There is no wisdom in contemning the laws of our nature, the settled

determined laws of which death is one. The wisdom is to stand in awe of these laws of our Creator, and prepare ourselves for the time of their arrival. He despiseth God that despiseth God's ordinance of death. He revereth God who revereth his appointments. Even if death were a stern necessity, which could not be bettered, I should not ask you to despise it, but to stand in awe. Seeing, however, it is a passage in our being that may become the most glorious, I solemnly invoke you to timeous measures, that you may secure the glorious summer and reaping-time which follow this wintry seed-time of our existence. For judgment comes on when death has done his work; and if you get not conscience disburdened in good time of all offence towards God and man, (which at this moment is possible, through the peace-speaking blood of Christ,) there will ensue at death such another reckoning as no death-bed confessional hath ever equalled. And if you get not the soul's attachments to the world loosened before death, there will ensue such a rending and agony, upon your departure, as no loss of country, of wife, or children, can be compared with. And if you take not a cool forethought of the future, nor prepare to meet it, there will come such a brood of fears, such a wreck of hopes, as no improvident spendthrift ever encountered. Oh, if the loss of fortune can so agitate the soul, and the loss of fame, the loss of a child, a wife, or a friend; if any one of these things

can make the world seem desolate, what conceivable agony, when all fortune, family, friends and fame shall have left you,—to dwell alone in a waste, empty, yawning void of grief and disappointment!

Ye sons of men, if these things are even so, and ye tread every moment upon the brink of time, and live upon the eve of judgment, what avails your many cares and your unresting occupations. Will your snug dwellings, your gay clothing and your downy beds, give freshness to the stiffened joints, or remove the disease which hath got a lodgment in your marrow and your bones? Will your full table and cool wines give edge to a jaded appetite, or remove the rancour of a rotted tooth, or supply the vigour of a worn-down frame? Will a crowded board, and the full flow of jovial mirth, and beauty's wreathed smile, and beauty's dulcet voice, charm back to a crazy dwelling the ardours and graces of youth? Will yellow gold bribe the tongue of memory, and wipe away from the tablets of the mind the remembrance of former doings? Will worldly goods reach upwards to heaven, and bribe the pen of the recording angel, that he should cancel from God's books all vestige of our crimes? Or bribe Providence, that no cold blast should come sweeping over our garden, and lay it desolate? Or abrogate that eternal law, by which sin and sorrow, righteousness and peace, are bound together? Will they lift up their voice, and say wickedness shall

no more beget woe, nor vice engender pain, nor indulgence end in weariness, nor the brood of sin fatten upon the bowels of human happiness, and leave, wherever their snakish teeth do touch, the venom and sting of remorse? And when that last most awful hour shall come, when we stand upon the brink of two worlds, and feel the earth sliding from beneath our feet, and nothing to hold on by that we should not fall into the unfathomed abyss; and when a film shall come over our eyes, shutting out from the soul, for ever, friends and favourites, and visible things; what are we, what have we, if we have not a treasure in heaven, and an establishment there? And when the deliquium of death is passed, and we find ourselves in the other world, under the eye of Him that is holy and pure, where shall we hide ourselves, if we have no protection and righteousness of Christ?

It is sure as death and destiny, that if you awake not from this infatuation of custom and pleasure, at the calls of God your Saviour, the habitations of dismal cruelty, endless days and nights of sorrow shall be your doom. Could I lift the curtain which shrouds eternity from the eye of time, and disclose the lazarhouse of eternal death, what sleeper of you would not start at the chaos of commingled grief! Dives, surrounded with his eastern pomp and luxury, little dreamt that he was to awaken in torment, and crave a drop of water to cool his tongue. What business has any forgetter of God with any better fare?

There is no purgatory to purge away the spiritual dross your spirits are encrusted with, and make you clean for heaven. It is not true, that after a season of endurance, the prince of the bottomless pit will hand you at length into heaven.—Without holiness no man can see God: without Christ no man can attain to holiness. Yet, conscious that you are unholy; deriving no mediation from Christ; deceiving yourselves with no respite nor alleviation of punishment; here you are, listless, lethargic, and immoveable!

Men and brethren! Is this always to continue, or is it to have an end? If you are resolved to brave it out, then make ready, for a proof to make nature shudder and quake to her inmost recesses. Can ye stand and brave Omnipotence to do his utmost! In this world, where power is muffled with mercy, there are a thousand inflictions which ye could not brave. Could ye stand all that was laid upon patient Job? Possessions, sons, daughters, health, reaved away—then hope benighted, and the light of heaven removed, and fellowship of friends, and almighty displays of power and wraths? The hardy band of Roman soldiers, (and who so stout-hearted as Romans?) swooned, every man of them, at the sight of one of God's visions. What could ye, were God's judgment-seat displayed, his justice no longer restrained, and his retribution no longer delayed; every fleet minister of execution ready harnessed at his post, and hell

opening wide its mouth, insatiable as the grave, and grimmer than the visage of death. Arraigned, self-condemned, singled out of every crime, solitary, unbefriended, one among thousands; life's pleasures at an end, the world's vision faded, God's anger revealed, sentence passed, judgment proceeding, and the pit opening its mouth on you, as the earth on Korah's company, to receive you quick. Can you stand this—can you think to brave it? Then, verily, ye are mad, or callous as the nether millstone.

Do you disbelieve it then, do you think God will not be so bad as his word? When did he fail? Did he fail at Eden, when the world fell? Did he fail at the deluge, where the world was cleansed of all animation, save a handful? Did he fail upon the cities of the plain, though remonstrated with by his friend, the father of the faithful? Failed he in the ten plagues of Egypt, or against the seven nations of Canaan; or, when he armed against his proper people, did ever his threatened judgments fail? Did he draw off when his own Son was suffering, and remove the cup from his innocent lips? And think ye he will fail, brethren, of that future destiny, from which to retrieve us he hath undertaken all his wondrous works unto the children of men! Why, if it were but an idle threat, would he not have spared his only begotten Son, and not delivered him up to death? That sacred blood, as it is the security of heaven to those who trust in it, is the very seal of hell to those who despise it.

Disbelieve you cannot; brave it out you dare

not; then must you hope, at some more convenient season, to reform. So hoped the five virgins who slumbered and slept without oil in their lamps; and you know how they fared. Neither have you forgotten how the merchant, and the farmer, and the sons of pleasure, who refused the invitation to the marriage feast of the king's son, were consumed with fire from heaven. What is your life, that you should trust in it; is it not even a vapour that speedily passeth away? What security have you that heaven will warn you beforehand; or that heaven will help you to repentance whenever you please? Will the resolution of your mind gather strength as your other faculties of body and mind decay? Will sin grow weaker by being a while longer indulged; or God grow more friendly by being a while longer spurned; or the gospel more persuasive by being a while longer set at naught? I rede you, beware of the thief of time, Procrastination. This day is as convenient as to-morrow; this day is yours, to-morrow is not; this day is a day of mercy, to-morrow may be a day of doom.

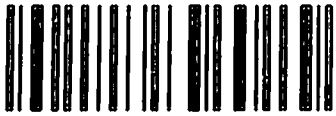
But the work is not the work of a moment, that it should be put off like the making of a will or the writing of a farewell epistle. It is the work of a lifetime, and too great a work for a lifetime. And if St. Paul, after such ceaseless labours and unwearied contentions with his nature, had still his anxieties, and speaks of the righteous as being hardly or with difficulty saved, how do you dare to defer it from time time, as a thing that can at any season, and in any space, be performed?

And, oh heavens! is God thus to be entreated by his creatures—are they to insist, for their own convenience, and put off the honour of his friendship from time to time, preferring this indulgence, that engagement, and trifling downright with his preferred invitations? And being thus put off, will the King of the Universe endure it patiently? Yes, he endures it patiently—that is, he leaves you to yourselves, and does not cut you off with prompt and speedy vengeance. But he leaves you to yourselves; and every refusal hardens you a little more, and every resistance closes up another avenue of grace, and every postponement places farther off the power of acceptance; and though God changeth not his mercy, we change our capacity of mercy—cooling more and more, hardening more and more, till old age, with its lethargy and fixed habits, steals on apace, and feeble-mindedness, and sickness, which brings with it the routine of sick-bed attendance, but little or no repentance, no opportunity for new obedience, no space for trying the spirit we are of,—and death to such a penitent becomes a leap in the dark—but as such penitents are rare or never, death to such procrastinators rivets up the closing avenues of grace, and presents him to the judgment-seat, fixed, finished, and incurable!

Do Thou, great source of all intelligence, forgive the errors and imperfections which thine omniscient eye beholdeth in this discourse; remembering the limited faculties of every creature

and the clouds which sin hath induced upon the mind of man. If aught hath been uttered injurious to thy Majesty, whereof thou art very jealous, do thou forgive that greatest of transgressions. If aught hath been said opposed to thy revealed word, hinder it from its evil influence upon the minds of men; and if Thou, who knowest the end from the beginning, dost know that this book is to harm the interests of thy Son's gospel, then never may it find favour in the eyes of men, but die as soon as it is born. But if, as it is intended and devoted to thy glory and to the eternal welfare of men, so it be fitted to procure the same, do Thou give it large prosperity and a lengthened life. Obscure its weak and erroneous parts, and sharpen its points of truth, and prepare the soul of every reader for its reception—that men may awaken from deep sleep, and prepare to meet thy righteous face For Thou, who knowest all things, dost know how the souls of thousands perish from earthly enjoyment and eternal blessedness, through that veil of prejudice and ignorance which Satan, the prince of this world, hath cast over them. Arise, O Lord! arise, for the sake of the earth, and make thy name to be glorious from the rising to the setting sun. This grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Saviour, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever—AMEN.

B. Bensley, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.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